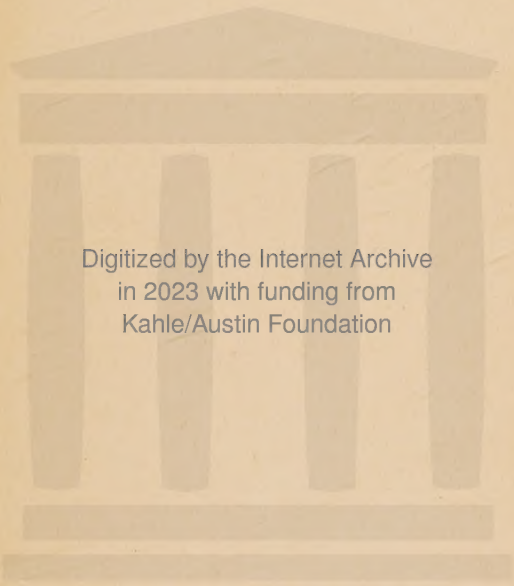




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# SAINT MATTHEW'S WITNESS

TO

WORDS AND WORKS OF THE LORD

OR

OUR SAVIOUR'S LIFE AS REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL OF  
HIS EARLIEST EVANGELIST

*Wolfe R.B.*

BY

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*The Church and Science; or, The Ancient Hebraic Idea of the Days of  
Creation; The Wise Men: Who They Were, and How They Came  
to Jerusalem; The Star of Our Lord; or, Christ Jesus,  
King of All Worlds, both of Time or Space; and  
Thoughts on the Holy Gospels: How They  
Came to Be in Manner and Form  
as They Are*

*From Mr. S. J. W.*

*— 92 —*

NEW YORK: HUNT & EATON  
CINCINNATI: CRANSTON & STOWE

1891

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# CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I.	
THE INTRODUCTION TO SAINT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.....	24
CHAPTER II.	
SAINT MATTHEW'S INTRODUCTION.—(CONTINUED.).....	38
CHAPTER III.	
JOHN THE BAPTIST—THE BAPTISM.....	47
CHAPTER IV.	
ON THE TEMPTATION.....	59
CHAPTER V.	
TIME AND PLACE OF THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY—PLAN OF SAINT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL AS TO THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.....	82
CHAPTER VI.	
THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT—THE BEATITUDES.....	90
CHAPTER VII.	
THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—(CONTINUED.).....	108
CHAPTER VIII.	
PLAN AND PURPOSE OF CHAPTERS VIII AND IX.....	125



CHAPTER IX.	PAGE
ON MIRACLES.—(CHAPTERS VIII AND IX CONTINUED.).....	132
CHAPTER X.	
THE WONDER AND SIGN AT GADARA—DEMON-POSSESSION.—(CHAPTERS VIII AND IX CONTINUED.).....	141
CHAPTER XI.	
THE WORD TO THE TWELVE.....	153
CHAPTER XII.	
THE SETTING FORTH OF THE MISSION TO THE JEWS AND TO THE WORLD—THE MESSAGE OF JOHN.....	165
CHAPTER XIII.	
THE CONFLICT WITH PHARISAISM.....	172
CHAPTER XIV.	
THE VEILING AND UNVEILING OF TRUTH IN PARABLES.....	185
CHAPTER XV.	
OF THE MURDER OF THE FRIEND.....	192
CHAPTER XVI.	
PHARISEES FROM JERUSALEM SET THE GALILEANS AGAINST THE CHRIST.....	198
CHAPTER XVII.	
THE COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON—THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN—THE RETURN—THE MIRACLE OF THE FOUR THOUSAND—THE CONCLAVE AT MAGDALA.....	207
CHAPTER XVIII.	
THE COUNTRY AND TIME—THE PEOPLE AND THE TWELVE....	219
CHAPTER XIX.	
THE ACCEPTED CONFESSION.....	235

# CONTENTS.

v

CHAPTER XX.	PAGE
THE TRANSFIGURATION.....	241
CHAPTER XXI.	
THE CHRIST SECURES FREEDOM AND UNITY.....	255
CHAPTER XXII.	
SAINT LUKE'S GOSPEL FROM IX, 51, TO XVIII, 15.....	264
CHAPTER XXIII.	
THE WORD OF OUR LORD ON MARRIAGE.....	276
CHAPTER XXIV.	
OF RICHES AND REWARDS—THE YOUNG RULER.....	292
CHAPTER XXV.	
THE TWO LEADING IDEAS IN THE FIRST GOSPEL—SAINT MAT- THEW AND SAINT JOHN.....	299
CHAPTER XXVI.	
THE CHRIST GOES UP TO JERUSALEM—ENTRY INTO THE CITY— THE WITHERED TREE.....	312
CHAPTER XXVII.	
THE DEPUTATION FROM THE SANHEDRIN .....	318
CHAPTER XXVIII.	
OF GOVERNMENTS—OF THE LIFE HEREAFTER—AND OF THE SCRIPTURES.....	334
CHAPTER XXIX.	
THE LAST WORD TO THE JEWS.....	346
CHAPTER XXX.	
THE WORD ON OLIVET.....	354
CHAPTER XXXI.	
THE LAST DAYS.—(CHAPTERS XXVI, XXVII.).....	376

	PAGE
CHAPTER XXXII.	
THE LAST DAYS—THE ARREST.—(CHAPTERS XXVI, XXVII CONTINUED.).....	383
CHAPTER XXXIII.	
THE LAST DAYS—OUR LORD BEFORE PILATE.—(CHAPTERS XXVI, XXVII CONTINUED.).....	392
CHAPTER XXXIV.	
THE RESURRECTION.....	400



“THINGS which they who are without have never been able to imagine, no, not in a dream, are by these men with great certainty both published and made convincing to cities, nations, and people in the land both of Greeks and barbarians, and all concerning things far beyond nature; for all their discourse is concerning things in heaven, while they bring in to us another principle of life, another manner of living, both Wealth and Poverty, Freedom and Slavery, Life and Death, our World and our Polity, all changed.”—SAINT CHRYSOSTOM, *Homily on Saint Matthew*.



# SAINT MATTHEW'S WITNESS

TO

WORDS AND WORKS OF OUR LORD.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

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THE BIBLE COMES NOT TO BE JUDGED, BUT TO SIT IN JUDGMENT ON US. This draws the line clear and sharp between the highest and all meaner thoughts of Holy Scripture, between false and true ideas of the word of God. This convicting flash lights up the conflict as to the Bible. And yet this Pascal-like sentence of Tayler Lewis only re-utters these words from the lips of the One who could not err: "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

I. At once, then, here comes up this question, Ought there to be any criticism of Saint Matthew's holy gospel? There ought to be and there can be none if criticism be fault-finding. That used to be its drift, but now two words were better; for, outgrowing its early bad disposition, criticism now seeks not only for faults, but also for truth and beauty. Finer qualities of mind and heart come into play in the finding out



of truth and beauty than in finding fault; yet, all three together come short of *appreciation*, which is the aim and height of true criticism, and is something more difficult, delicate, and rare than praise or blame.

There might be criticism of a faultless picture, if such there were. The skillful in the art of painting would there search for the unifying thought in each group and figure, in color, light, and shade. They would diligently consider what the artist could, and what he could not, put on the canvas. They would rightly estimate the difficulties overcome and appreciate the picture with the fullness of intelligent wonder and delight. And yet the simple, natural admiration of those who know nothing of the technique of the painter's art, their sense and appreciation of the meaning, beauty, and power of the picture are often the truest, best of criticism—the very thing itself.

The wise and the unwise in Christ are one in their devout admiration of Saint Matthew's holy gospel; they are one in a common delight in its excellent glory, which comes not of learning, but of grace. The hearts of both are stirred by its simple eloquence or stilled by its awful beauty. Yet so unstudied seems the excellence of his holy gospel that most persons will deny that in its construction the inspired evangelist wrought with deliberate skill, and will say that if he did there is no possibility of tracing the marks and the signs thereof. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," they will say. "There can be no analysis of the song of a bird singing at his own sweet will. This artless gospel is told all the better for being simply told. To look curiously into its spell and

charm is an infant's pulling apart the leaves of a flower to come at the secret of its fragrance." And yet there are laws for the sighing wind, the songs of birds; and the child to whom there is a secret in the flower is wiser than the man to whom its beauty is a thing of chance.

The art of criticism, with its new instruments, new appliances, and widened range, if reverently and rightly applied to the Holy Scriptures, may be of great use. But criticism cannot attain to the precision, certainty, and universal acceptance of mathematical truth. It can never be a science in the sense in which geometry is a science. Neither can human history. And yet there are critics who boast of reconstructing and remolding, "by the principles of critical historical science," the Holy Scriptures, to whose wisdom and truth our Lord attests.

Some of those critics have misused and abused criticism in trying to prove that the holy gospel of Saint Matthew is a frail tissue of fancies and facts clumsily woven; a heap of incongruous, slowly gathered traditions; his gospel only in name; and therefore it may and should be the part of true criticism to prove that this gospel is one man's witness to our Redeemer and Lord, and a witness no man could have given, an argument in proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ no man could have made, had not our God been with him. In these days this is no useless thing, although in Saint Matthew's life-time it was known throughout the apostolic Christian generations that he wrote the earliest of the holy gospels, and this has been faithfully remembered by the ever-existing family of Christ.

II. Saint Matthew is not here to tell us why he wrote each line and word just as he did; and were he here he could not fully tell; for at times the quickness of wise decision in a writer's choice of words or facts is hardly a matter of consciousness, and leaves no trace in memory. Besides, there was in the soul of the inspired evangelist the quickening, guiding, and ruling of the Holy Ghost, who made Saint Matthew's work his own in a sense far beyond that of the legal maxim, *Facit per alium facit per se*. From Him his gospel truly came. And yet the Spirit so wrought with his evangelist that what in a true sense were Saint Matthew's own reasons for speech or for silence, and for differences between his way of relating some things and that of his brethren, may sometimes be known.

Reverent insight into the human element in his holy gospel awakens finer, deeper sympathy with the spirit of the inspired evangelist. And in like manner the glorious unity of truth in the souls of all the evangelists is better known and more deeply felt. For not until the dissimilarities of witnesses are clearly distinguished can their testimonies be properly combined.

In the consideration of such hard questions my judgment must of course at times be at fault. Insufficient or unsound evidence may be given for a sound conclusion, or a right case be wrongly stated. A pioneer hews out the best path he can. Others who come after will better the way. They will abandon parts of the line for a firmer foundation. They will smooth, or broaden, or shorten the road. The casting up of the highways of the Lord is not the work of one generation.



III. Saint Matthew, with his brethren, framed the oral gospel. While so doing he began to select the facts and arrange the order of things in the framing of his written gospel. Outlines and some of the phrases of the oral gospel re-appear in his gospel, and as he states facts without note or comment it might be thought that no room was left for constructive skill; that his genius must have been cramped and fettered by his working in concert with others and combining their witness with his own in a document of an official kind. Yet Saint Matthew formed a symmetrical, comprehensive plan. He clearly brings out his leading ideas in their true relations and just proportions. The facts selected for his argument are presented in the time-order he thinks best. He describes things in characteristic ways. He gives his official witness to the Son of man and Son of God with freedom, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."

The Holy Spirit made Saint Matthew's witness more truly and fully Saint Matthew's own in bringing out his human witness with more than human clearness and power. On his gospel the seal of the Spirit is set, the seal of his brethren, and the triple seal of his own mind and heart and will. Though inspired, he thought and felt as a man; therefore in his thoughts and feelings we can share; and, seeing a little of how his soul was moved by the words and works of Christ Jesus, we may learn a little more of our Lord than can be known in other ways.

IV. Of the life of Shakespeare a few great facts are known with certainty, while the rest is a blank, and so of the life of Saint Matthew. His father's name

was Alphæus. He, himself, was a collector of taxes. He was called to be a disciple of Christ, and his name, Levi, was then changed—by his Master, no doubt—to Matthew, *the gift of God*; a significant change, for he was both of the twelve apostles and of the four evangelists. Yet no words of *this silent man* are heard in the gospels, as there are of Saint Thomas, Saint Philip, and others. And of him the fathers have but little to tell. To the earliest Christian generations his gospel was every thing, his life comparatively nothing. With his brethren he tarried for years in Jerusalem; but the fathers, who speak of him, do not agree as to the time of his sojourn or as to where he preached afterward, whether in Macedonia, Persia, Egypt, or Ethiopia. And they leave us in doubt whether he died a natural death or by martyrdom.

Without an exception, those fathers state that he wrote his gospel in Hebrew. Yet our Greek gospel is no translation.\* It was universally received by the earlier Christian generations. This and other facts leave no room for doubt that Saint Matthew himself transferred his gospel from Hebrew into Greek—as he could in a few hours. In the Hebrew it could be read only by Hebrews, and the Greek language was then in daily use among the Hebrews even in Palestine, and was known throughout the greater part of the Roman world.

Excepting what may be gleaned from the gospels very little is known of the life and character of Saint

\* The opinion of Erasmus, and generally assented to by competent judges.

Matthew.\* There the strange fact is told that he was a publican; that the Master, from the house where he healed the palsied man going past the receipt of customs, there called him—a strange place for such a call; and that without a word he rose above his love of money, of money-making, and followed Jesus. Every one in Capernaum had heard and known of his words and works, and yet in the instant action of Levi there may have been a quickness of decision characteristic of merchants, and also of the man. And certainly there was something of which no hint is given in what is told by himself. Levi's office was a good one. His collection district was the richest one in Galilee. And in that eastern land and lawless time to throw up his office for the sake of the Nazarene was to suffer his gathered riches to be seized and confiscated. This great sacrifice, unnamed by himself, is told by Saint Luke when he says, "*Levi left all.*" Some time afterward Levi, with the courtesy of a brave gentleman, gave a parting feast, and having to speak of things which then took place he alludes to it with such dignified reserve that we should doubt who gave it but for Saint Luke, who says, "*It was a great feast.*"

Saint Mark and Saint Luke, in telling of the call, naturally give his name as Levi; he as naturally gave himself the name he ever afterward bore. In their lists of the twelve Saint Thomas, paired with Saint Matthew, is put first; in Saint Matthew's own list the last and higher place is given to Saint Thomas. This

\* "Besides what we find in the canonical gospels there is not much that can be depended upon now left concerning him."—Jones on *The Canon*, Part iv, i, 11.

almost identifies the writer. And he is clearly, fully identified when in that roll of honor Saint Matthew is styled *the publican*, for not even a Jew would there have called him so. Bravely and honestly, frankly and humbly, Saint Matthew joins the confession of his former dishonorable evil life to the honorable name his Master gave him. That is in the handwriting of Saint Matthew, and if anywhere in this gospel his handwriting be known it goes far to prove that he wrote the whole of the gospel.

When Herods and the Romans ruled, the taking of one of the Zealots into the company of disciples was a bold thing. It was bolder to take into that little chosen company one of those publicans so heartily despised, so bitterly hated by the Jews; and as the life of our Lord was marked by prudence as well as courage, may it not have been that he discerned in the publican peculiar qualities and endowments of great value?

Still, it is not unlikely that the miserable business of Levi and its surroundings had caused him to lead a free life. And this has some countenance from the fact that going to the opposite extreme in his later years he became somewhat ascetic, if we may trust Saint Clement of Alexandria, when saying that "the apostle Saint Matthew partook of seeds and nuts and vegetables without flesh." This rather seems to be confirmed by one of Three Sayings of the evangelist given by Saint Clement: \* "Oppose the flesh, and so use it as not to gratify it in any excessive pleasure,

\* Saint Clement says this saying was current among the Nicolaitans, but he does not impeach its authority, and it suits what he tells of Saint Matthew's way of life. These reminiscences of sayings of the apostle may go to show that in early Christian time he was held in

but to enlarge the soul in faith and knowledge ;” \* for the Scriptures are so full of such teaching that the handing down of this saying by tradition looks as if it were a motto of Saint Matthew’s.

One of the Three Sayings which, according to Saint Clement, were constantly used by Saint Matthew, is that of a strictly conscientious man, somewhat extreme in his opinions: “If the neighbor of a believer fall into sin the believer himself is guilty of it, for if his conduct had been agreeable to the Word his neighbor would have regarded his life so much as not to have fallen into sin.”

At first sight, the third of the Three Sayings, *θαύμασον τὰ παρόντα*, “admire the things present,” seems to have little or no meaning. In this it is like some of the *memorabilia* of the wise men of Greece; and the likeness farther holds, for when the meaning comes out full and clear it ranks with any of their seven sayings. Saint Clement says, “Saint Matthew

peculiar regard. So, too, the fact that his gospel is quoted much oftener than the others by several of the fathers. I find that Saint Clement quotes from it almost as often as from all the other three. And these things agree with Saint Matthew’s being the earliest evangelist.

Jones (on *The Canon*, vol. i, p. 255, Oxford edition, 1798) says: “Those sayings were *oral* traditions, for Saint Clement would not have used the words he did if citing a book.” Jones prints the Apocryphal gospels with a translation in parallel columns. Thorough work, accurate scholarship, and generally the good sense of his conclusions make his treatise on *The Canon* a lasting monument of the solid English learning of the eighteenth century. It is a book not superseded by any later work, and a new edition with notes is much to be desired.

\* Book II, chap. i, of *Pædagogus*: “The Instructor,” in morals and manners, of converts from heathenism, giving directions as to dressing, eating, drinking, conversing, etc. Warning against gluttony, it refers to Saint Matthew, as cited above.



made that precept the beginning of true knowledge, as Plato did." "Admiration is the foundation of philosophy, so Montaigne said, and the saying is old as any, for Montaigne only repeats what Aristotle uttered ages before him." \* And Ruskin, citing Wordsworth's well-known line,

"We live by admiration, hope, and love,"

says, "Admiration is the best word for the various feelings of wonder, reverence, awe, and humility, which are needed for all lovely work, and which constitute the habitual temper of all noble and clear-sighted persons. Reverent admiration is the perfect human gift. Increase such reverence in human beings, and you increase their daily happiness, peace, and dignity; take it away, and you make them wretched as well as vile."

*Lo* and *behold* are as characteristic of Saint Matthew as *straightway* is of Saint Peter. They indicate the earnest, scrutinizing, reflective nature of Saint Matthew's soul. As said in the *Thoughts*, "Wisdom is the child of awe and wonder. The soul alive to a sense of the unseen and eternal is ever saying, *lo and behold!* as it every-where marks in the visible things in time the passing signs of the invisible power and wisdom of God." And that rightly this was applied to Saint Matthew the third of the Three Sayings is evidence, for tradition would not have treasured it up had it not been Saint Matthew's often-repeated word.

V. Our fate is not wholly of our own fashioning. There is a purpose in every life which the human

\* Bulwer, Lord Lytton.

will does not make and cannot mar. Men and women of colorless, commonplace lives have felt that never were lives so strange as theirs. Most persons have at times a dim perception that an overruling Power is shaping their course in accordance with unknown designs. And could the wretched wanderers, who have lost their way on the earth, catch glimpses of the kindness of the Father whose will to do them good cannot be thwarted by their own self-will, their tangled, darkened lives would sometimes brighten with gleams of loveliness, as at moments care-worn, time-withered faces brighten. Instants there are when meanings unthought of in the past suddenly stand out, or when the future so opens that if looked back upon they seem prophetic. And if formative instants, turning-points, times of decision in a life were separated from its every-day on-goings, light might be thrown upon the divine secrets hidden in every life. Now, with counsel from his brethren and wisdom from on high, the earliest evangelist so brought out such moments in the perfect life of the Son of man that his gospel is pre-eminently the one to be read first of all the holy gospels.

VI. In the gospel of Saint Matthew a serious severity hides the warmth of a heart it does not chill. In his soul there is a touch of sadness. The evil of the time is ever before him. Like Saint Augustine, he may have learned the sinwardness of the human heart from bitter experience. And yet, as the Evangelist owes much to Saint John's sympathy with the love of God, so it owes much to Saint Matthew's sympathy with the righteousness of his judgments. It was pre-ordained that the son of Alphæus should be

the evangelist he was. To *that* end his soul and his life were preconfigured. For *that* his mother sang to the child in her arms the hymns of Zion. For *that* in his manhood he unrolled on his knees the cylinder of the Scriptures, and "considered the years of ancient times, remembered the wonders of old." \*

VII. As Saint Matthew was an evangelist also, he was great among the apostles. Great the work to the apostles given, and great the work they all did! Never did other men put forth the world-moving strength of those intellectual Titans. And no other men were ever so enlightened, guided, and made strong by the Holy Ghost.

Guilty men would now dishonor the Eternal Word by treating his written word as history and literature. Yet, his written word, so far as it resembles history and literature, does so *only in form*. The Israel of old well knew their unlikeness. From their literature and history they reverently kept their Scriptures distinct and apart. Of history and literature they had much; † but so far from keeping it as

\* The citations from ancient Scripture in the gospels that were taken from the oral gospel, with those which Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John made for themselves, are from the Greek of the Septuagint. Saint Matthew's own citations are from the Hebrew; and the inference is a fair one that he was pre-eminently wise in the Hebrew Scriptures.

† Not so long ago it was held by many of the learned that writing was not till after the time of Moses; but it has not only been discovered that the memory of man runneth not to the time when the art of writing was not, but, also, that in the region of the Euphrates and in countries to the west there were "book-towns," so named from the libraries therein. That was long before the days of Moses; and therefore the mention in Job of writing and of books is no longer any

faithfully as they kept Holy Scripture they suffered most of their uninspired writings, and among them even those of King Solomon, "whose wisdom excelled the wisdom of Egypt," to perish. With them Malachi was their last prophet. And their annals of those glorious years, when in the most unequal of successful wars the God of their fathers raised up the heroic Maccabees to save the language, nationality, and religion of Israel, were not classed by the Hebrews with their holy books. They drew a line between the Scriptures which our Lord and his apostles so often quote and the Apocrypha, which they never quote.\* To the

evidence that it was not written before those days. It also follows that the mention of a few books in the Old Testament can no longer be thought of as if those were almost all the books the Hebrews had, but as *allusions to a literature*. There were three lives of David, by Samuel, Nathan "the prophet," and Gad; three of Solomon, by Nathan, Iddo "the seer," and Abijah; two of Rehoboam, and one of each of the kings Abijah and Jehoshaphat. See 1 Chron. xxix, 29; 2 Chron. x, 29; xii, 15; xx, 34. Those books were known to a writer of one of the sacred books; and if it be asked why they were not classed with the sacred books, no answer can be given save that they were held to be works of literature.

Besides these the Book of Jasher is named. From 2 Sam. ii, 18, this is seen to have been a collection of songs, and that it began to be made at an early time is proved by Josh. x, 13. One ancient literary work, *The Wars of the Lord*, is named by Moses himself (Num. xxi, 14). Of all those books the mention is brief and somewhat incidental; but of the lost writings of King Solomon, almost a literature in themselves, there is this description: "Solomon spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were ten hundred and five; and he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." 1 Kings iv, 32, 33.

\* These words of Lücke are of the more weight as from him a different opinion might be looked for: "There is no trace in the discourses of Jesus of the use of apocryphal books."

Hebrews the Apocrypha were useful, pious writings, but they were not the word of God.

The Hebrews, arranging the Holy Scriptures in three classes, put Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, books that *in form* were historical, in the same class with books of prophecy; and our Lord sanctioned this classification when he said, "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me."

Of those Scriptures our Lord cited the three books now the most spoken against—the books of Daniel, of Jonah, and Deuteronomy—out of which he answered Satan in the wilderness. His treatment of the Scriptures accredited and sanctioned the belief of the Hebrews that "prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man, but that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In comparison with him all others have seen those Scriptures afar off. No holy men or holy women have ever so taken them to their hearts. No just idea of the feeling of Christ Jesus toward those Scriptures can be formed without long and close communion with all that reveals it in the gospels; as, for example, his giving this reason for not asking for legions of angels to save him from shame and death, "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?"

The apostles were clothed by our Lord with such authority, were so enlightened by the Holy Ghost that they who reject their interpretations of those Scriptures and put their own in their places dishonor and deny the Son of God. They are of a like spirit with those Jews who said, "How knoweth this man letters?" Their higher criticism was born of Jews

who, in their hatred to Christianity, soon began to obliterate from the Hebrew Scriptures here a little and there a good deal of the Messianic element;\* and those who know any thing of human nature need no documents to prove that, when the lost knowledge of the Hebrew tongue was regained by Christians from Jews in the revival of learning in the sixteenth century, the Jews, with their hearts embittered by cruel persecutions, then seized the opportunity of insinuating into the minds of their confiding pupils interpretations of Messianic Scripture which were unlike those ancient Hebrew interpretations, traces and examples of which are found in the New Testament, in Targums that date nearly or quite back to the days of the apostles, and in the tomes of the Christian fathers.

The onflow of our continental rivers, whether northward to frozen seas or southward to the Gulf, is determined at their source; and for a long time great thought-currents keep to the line of their first impulse. The current that the Jews set in motion four hundred years ago still flows on in the direction they intended. And this, I think, is the principal *historic* reason why so much of scholastic comment on Messianic prophecy, coeval in its beginnings with the

\* From the question our Lord put to the scribes (Matt. xxiii, 41-46; Mark xii, 35-37) it is *certain* that in his time the scribes held that the one hundred and tenth was a Messianic psalm. Yet I find Tertullian, before the end of the second century, saying (*Against Marcion*, Book v, chap. ix) to this effect: "The Jews endeavor to deprive us of Psalm cx, saying it was a chant in honor of Hezekiah." For that king some Jews have put David, Solomon, and even Abraham, though others have admitted its Messianic meaning. And a Jewish spirit has so bewitched some higher critics and others who have listened to them that they have said it was not Messianic. It has even been referred to one of the Maccabees! And yet our Lord claimed it as his own.



revival of learning, *is not Christian, or Hebraic, but Jewish.*

The turbid river, swollen to a flood, now inundates and wastes the solid lands. The higher critics, taught by Jews to try to crucify the soul of Scripture, would now cremate its body. They say they have found out that in and near "the time of the carrying away into Babylon" great Ezra and other Jews, whose names have dropped out of memory, forged histories, prophecies, and psalms; and, giving out those forgeries as ancient sacred oracles, they succeeded in imposing upon their quick-witted countrymen, in their own land and in all the wide lands of their dispersion, a great body of numerous, minute, uncomfortable, exacting, rigorous laws, rites, ceremonies, and observances as things of divine origin and authority. This is what, at times substantially and at all times essentially, they are trying to make men believe;\* but to common sense the mere statement of their case refutes and condemns itself. For, if that be true, great Ezra and some other Jews manufactured, not only the faith of holy apostles, of the army of the martyrs, of confessors and saints, but they manufactured the religion and, consequently, the civilization of all Christendom. The fabulous stories of heathen mythologies, compared to this, are commonplace and reasonable things. To Ezra and those nameless Jews let prayers be offered!

\*Reginald Stuart Poole says: "The theory of Kuenen and Wellhausen as to the Pentateuch has the attraction of novelty and the charm of destructiveness. It supposes the main body of the Hebrew legislation to have been constructed after the return from Babylon with the direct object of clothing with the authority of Moses what he did not write. This is plainly to make the greater part of the law a pious fraud."

Throughout all Christendom build temples to them, for never were they men! They were gods! As well might the higher critics believe, as in hell some of them will perhaps believe, that the mighty magician Ezra and a pack of Jews *forged the Holy Land*—cliffs of Sinai, sands of the desert, the two Lebanons, cedars and all, Gennesaret vexed with storms, the still waters of Sodom, the embattled plain of Esdraelon, the Philistine coast, the purple hills of Moab, temples of Edom, cattle and oaks of Bashan, Hermon, Tabor, and Carmel, the Mount of Olives, the rock of Zion!

Well may the Church of Christ be angered when the higher critics call her sacred records *pious frauds*! And well may she be struck with horror at their blasphemy in saying that the Son of God expired on the cross with the words of one of those forgeries on his holy lips!

To Ezra and the Jews the Samaritans were aliens, outcasts, enemies. Enraged, embittered, the Samaritans hindered three of the Persian monarchs from doing what otherwise they would have done for Jerusalem. The quarrel was bloody and lasting. Yet those critics say the Samaritans accepted the forgeries of the men they hated and by whom they were hated and despised as ancient holy writings of Moses!

In the last century all the Samaritans were thought to be dead; and a thrill of wonder ran through the schools of Europe when it was told that some of them were still alive—a thrill of wonder changing to admiration when it was known that on the hill of Samaria those few Samaritans, with unsleeping, untiring

vigilance, still kept watch and ward over a copy of the five books of Moses, an old, time-worn parchment which the gold of France or of England or of Russia could not purchase. They are the witnesses of God in history, testifying against the fiction that Ezra forged the Pentateuch. They witness to Moses, who foretold the Messiah in whom the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob believed. They are fast fulfilling their course. Their appointed work will soon be done. Before long on the hill of Samaria the traveler from distant lands will find the grave of the last Samaritan.

VIII. In the ancient Hebrew Scripture there are depths unfathomed, springs unopened, unawakened harmonies, truth yet to be discovered as to the generation of all created things—as to the laws of nature, the affiliation of the nations, the on-goings and meaning of history, as well as truth concerning the mystery and the mercy in Christ Jesus;\* and much of the glory of the truth in that ancient Scripture is now to be seen *only when later Scripture throws upon it the light which begins to shine in the gospel of Saint Matthew.*

Many have thought that Saint Matthew wrote for the Jews, and possibly his love for his own countrymen had something to do with his presentation of the fulfilling of prophecy in Christ Jesus. But *there is no proof of this*; and though he might have made an especial appeal to them in other writings, yet to have thus restricted the proclamation of the glad tidings

\* Even of the gospels what Plumptre (who has done much for their historic elucidation) said in 1867 is still true: "Their full mines of history are only beginning to be explored."

would not have been consistent with the nature and design of a Gospel. To the Gentiles the glad tidings could be preached somewhat apart from the forewitnessing by Moses and all the prophets to Christ Jesus; but in such cases all the evidence of the gospel and all the fullness of its glory and promise could not be made known, and therefore the Messiah, as revealed in the Scriptures of old, is set in the forefront of the earliest written official apostolic gospel.\*

In that gospel the argument in proof of our Lord's divinity is, in part, so based upon the history and prophecy in Hebrew Scripture, that line of its evidence is there so fully and clearly indicated, that this distinguishing characteristic of the earliest gospel is the less to be looked for in the gospels that came afterward. This explains the remarkable fact that the second gospel opens with a solitary though a sweeping reference to the ancient Scriptures.† They are more in mind in Saint Luke's gospel. Their style colors the style of Saint John's, but Saint Matthew's direct references to ancient Hebrew Scripture outnumber all those of the other evangelists.

IX. The old *covenant*—which is the true sense of the word so often rendered testament—*begins with a promise of a Saviour from sin.* The acceptable

\* On the last page of the Syriac version, made in the apostolic generation, are these words: *The end of the Holy Gospel of the preaching of Saint Matthew*—instructive words that show what in that early day was thought to be the apostolic style of preaching.

† Its position makes this reference very significant. It may rightly be styled a solitary reference, unless the one in the twenty-eighth verse of chapter xv be retained, though not found in some manuscripts.

sacrifice of righteous Abel testifies to his belief in that covenant. To all the pious in Israel there was an assurance of the fulfillment of its promise in their Scriptures and in the types and shadows of the law. To give that assurance was the office-work of those Scriptures, making them one Scripture throughout, and that office-work they accomplished. Our Lord said that Abraham desired to see his day. "We hope in thy word," cried the pious of old. "*Our souls faint for thy salvation.*" To the Israel of God—as to John the Baptist, in whom the long-silent voice of all the prophets spake again—the promised Redeemer was "the Lamb of God who *beareth* the sin of the world." \* Zacharias, "filled with the Holy Ghost," prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and *redeemed his people*. He hath raised up *for us* a horn of *salvation* in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets *since the world began.*" White-haired Simeon, with the Holy Child in his arms, prayed, saying, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen *thy salvation.*" Anna, the aged prophetess, "who departed not from the temple, but served God night and day with fastings and prayers, coming in at that instant, gave thanks and spake of the Lord *to all them that looked*

\* John i, 29. *Beareth* best agrees with the analogy of Scripture. This, in our version is put in the margin. It was the word in the gospel read by Saint Chrysostom. Therefore it is to be preferred, and his comment on it is too valuable to be omitted. "He did not say, 'which remitteth,' but, implying a more guardian care, 'which *beareth* it.' For it is not at all the same to take away and to take upon himself. For the one could be done without peril, the other only with death."

*for redemption in Jerusalem."* And the blessed Virgin said: "My spirit hath rejoiced in God *my Saviour*. He hath holpen his servant *Israel* as he spake to *our fathers*, to Abraham and his seed forever." On the same day that our Lord rose from the dead, on the road to Emmaus, he said to two of his disciples who "were sad because they had trusted that Jesus, a prophet mighty in word and deed, had been he who should have redeemed Israel, and the chief priests and rulers had crucified him, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! And *beginning at Moses* he expounded *in all the Scriptures* the things pertaining to himself."

In the earliest chapters of the earliest gospel the correspondence of the Life foretold with the life of Christ Jesus is felt, and this vein pulsates through it all. The cry that was to go before the Christ is heard. Moses the lawgiver, Elijah the reformer, leave Jesus alone with his disciples, and *then* from the excellent glory comes the voice, "*Hear him.*" The marvelous pre-intimation in the oldest book of prophecy is fulfilled by "the Son of man in the three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

X. As the divine purpose to call the Gentiles into the place of the Jews more and more comes into sight in the earliest gospel, there is a *semblance* of a change in the Saviour's purpose and mission, but its real unity is always evident. The broader and the narrower mission are blended. The one widens into the other. The problem of the harmonizing of the mission to the Jews and to the Gentiles is solved,



and solved through facts only. In the word to the twelve in chapter x Saint Matthew finds a well-marked point of transition from the narrower to the broader view of the great redemption, but all before that is diligently adjusted to the *seeming* change to come. In part, at least, this *may* have been a reason why some facts were passed over by Saint Matthew; not, indeed, that any facts in any way contradicted any thing he said of the Redeemer's purpose and course, but that some things *may* have been passed over for the sake of clearness in the drawing of the interwoven lines of thought.

Saint Matthew's gospel ever keeps in mind that Jesus, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, son of David, son of Abraham, is the Son of God. He comes "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"—words given in Saint Matthew's gospel only—yet his star is seen by Magi of the Far-East; and as all of a martyr's life is the preparation for the larger world into which his liberated soul enters through a violent death, so all before the crucifixion prepares for the wider mission fully opened by the command, "Go, teach all nations."

In this gospel more than in the others our Lord is revealed as the lawgiver, not of spiritual life only, but also of social life. His revelations as to the latter are a great part of the teachings between the Transfiguration and the Passion of our Lord, and to them especial consideration will be given. But the leading ideas before named, and all else that enters into Saint Matthew's argument, is subordinate and subservient to what was higher and greater. All thoughts, all feelings, all desires in the apostle's soul were lost in the

one desire that as his Lord and Saviour lived in his own heart and mind and memory he might live in his gospel; so that as he himself believed others might believe on him, and believing have life through his name. For that the evangelist prayed, and the gospel according to Saint Matthew is the answer of the Holy Ghost.

## THE INTRODUCTION TO SAINT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

## CHAPTER I.

THE common form of an Introduction is not essential. If a writer begins with so telling about himself as to show why he wrote, such autobiographic leaves may do the work of an introduction—that is, they may help the understanding of what is to come. Facts from the history of the time may do the like. And in that way Saint Matthew's first two chapters are what in modern parlance may be styled his introduction.

Though not in form they are such in fact; for they bind together the past and the present. *Seen* is the foreseen star. "Out of Israel have I called my Son" marks the correspondence between the life of Israel and the life of Christ. The "trouble" of Jerusalem foreshadows the treatment of Christ Jesus by the Jews. The Magi, representatives of the nation, by their coming and their worship pre-intimate the breadth of his kingdom, the wonder and sign of the star, his power in the heavens. The first and the last verses clearly show that the new Scripture is to complete the older Scripture, and thus those two chapters do the work of an introduction, and they do much more.\*

\* The two chapters that open the new Testament are much spoken against. There Schleiermacher wrecked his faith and said that Jesus was the son of Joseph. Following in his evil path, Meyer, another heretic, says that the revelations of the Incarnation in Saint Luke and Saint Matthew are unhistorical, thus *sweeping away its record*, though

II. The names of the family and of the national ancestor of Jesus are engraved on the first stone of this portal arch—the name of Abraham, of whose line was to come the Saviour, promised in Eden, and the name of David the king, in whose family his birth was forewritten. On this, proof instantly follows of the superhuman generation of the Christ, with the prophetic announcement that he is Emmanuel—God with us.

The new Scripture opens well. But this is no predetermining of what Holy Scripture ought to be. The human mind can no more predetermine *that* than what nature ought to be. Yet, if it knows what the Scripture is, it may see something of its reasonableness. Thus, when a Christian lays the opening chapters of the earliest and the second gospel side by side he sees that the second gospel could not have begun the new Scripture; sees that Saint Mark's opening is proof that the Church rightly remembers the time-order of the two gospels; and he also finds some evidence of the fact, *proved* in other ways, that when Saint Peter's gospel was

he holds to the fact. Norton, rejecting the first two chapters of Saint Matthew, began his translation of the gospel with the third. And truly Bishop Ellicott said, "It is painful to witness the hardihood with which their genuineness has been called in question." Now, in the ill-treatment of those chapters by such scholars their lack of command of the art of literary criticism is plain, and that of its right application to inspired writings they knew nothing. Meyer shows this, not only in his senseless notion that the angelic announcements exclude each other because the one in Saint Luke is made *before* the Incarnation and the one in Saint Matthew is made after it, but generally in all he has said (so, too, Strauss and others) in trying to prove that the two gospels of the infancy are not reconcilable. As to all of this an answer is given later on.

written out by Saint Mark the gospel of Saint Matthew was known and read in all the Christian congregations.

III. Something of Saint Matthew's mind and heart may be seen in the way he treats the public and family record by which he proves that the lineage of Jesus is the lineage forewritten of the Christ; yet a genealogical table is the last place to look for any thing of that kind; and if his feelings come to light when he is copying a roll of names, then his feelings may come to light at any time. If their impress is visible on that stiff old parchment it may be looked for anywhere. If the inspired evangelist touches\* up a catalogue he will handle more plastic material as he knows is best and right.

Now, when Saint Matthew was copying that legal document, he thought of the humiliation of the Lord, of sinners and strangers linked with Him in the chain of life. Into that roll of men's names he interwove the names of four women; not of beautiful Rachel, the wife beloved, the sorrowing mother, in prophecy the type of Israel, but the name of a daughter of Moab, the name of Rahab, of Tamar, and of her "who had been the wife of Urias." And he thought also of the glory of the Lord, for he gave the royal, and not, as Saint Luke does, the family, succession; and to David,

\* Minor touches in this table show that its facts were well considered. This comes out in the reason Saint Chrysostom gives for the words *Judah and his brethren*: "At this point the race of the Jews begins to have its peculiar mark;" and again, in the reason he gives for the naming of Phares and Zara—that the facts at the birth of those twins were pre-intimating prophetic symbols explained and fulfilled in the historic relations of the Jews and the Gentiles.

alone of all the monarchs, he gave his title, twice repeated, David the king.\*

IV. Saint Matthew tells of time-harmonies in the genealogy; and though ancient Eastern scriptural thought as to "times and seasons" is not clear to the Western mind, yet how appropriate the revealing by the inspired evangelist of such time-harmonies when he was meditating upon the ancestral time of Him "by whom the time-worlds were made!" †

The sacred writers surpass all other writers in saying or suggesting much in a few words. Especially is this true of the suggestiveness of the first verse of Saint Matthew: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Here as the title of what follows—that is, of the genealogy, or, as Saint Chrysostom believed, as the title of his whole gospel—he quotes words from the opening of the old Scripture, as written in the Greek of the Septuagint, then in common use among the Jews and with our Lord and his apostles; and by *the book of the generation of Jesus Christ* he points to this verse at the beginning of the Bible, "*The book of the generation of the heavens and the earth in the day when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,*" and reveals that *the new creation is no less wonderful than*

\* For questions as to the Genealogy, see *Thoughts*, Part ii.

† Καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν. "He made *the time-worlds*." The Greek marks the time-element *in the universe*. But so little now is thought of time as an element in world-making that here the translation "He made the world" points only to the space element. Yet, here, even to put *ages* for *worlds* would erroneously limit the meaning to our planet; for, here, the creation of time itself is implied, as seen when the verse is connected with xi, 3: "The worlds (αἰῶνας) were framed together by the word of God." Time can only be conceived of as a



*the generation of all things created.\** And thus the thought of the creative glory of the Eternal Word which is the first thought in the last gospel is the first thought in the earliest gospel!

Like so many of the way-side oracles in Scripture, the inspired evangelist's allusive quotation from the Septuagint is often passed by unnoticed. And it is easier to pass by this oracle, because with characteristic quickness and condensation Saint Matthew joins right on to that wide-embracing scriptural allusion a few words which are a volume of historic allusion, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, *the son of David, the son of Abraham.*" No rude chronicler was Saint Matthew! The gospel of the writer, who so humbly styles himself a publican, and has often been said to have written as a publican would, opens with a marvel of comprehensive, con-

circle or cycle. It runs on in cycles, such as, the six creative cycles, the great cycle before the birth of Christ, the one called by the apostles "the last time," and the cycle of the new heavens and the new earth. It is "through faith that we understand" the creation and "the framing together" of the ordained succession of the time-cycles, which make up the one great cycle, *Time itself.*

\* In the first verse γενεσας, in the eighteenth γεννησις; in Latin, *generatio* and *nativitas*. Beza's translation of Saint Matthew is side by side with the translation by Tremellius of its Syriac version. They are so translated in the Bible of Tremellius and Junius. Other versions and the fathers agree with it with no exception of any weight. And such versions and comments are older than any manuscripts.

In each verse the Vulgate has *generatio*, the larger word. Du Hamel, in his edition (Venice, 1731), says of verse 18, "Graece: Christi *nativitas* hoc erat;" and he intimates that *generatio* was used because the line was taken for the end of the genealogy. Saint Jerome, connecting the line with the Immaculate Conception, *may* have written, "Christi *generatio* sic erat," because his text had not

densed, fruitful utterance, that has no parallel outside of the Bible!

V. That long before Saint Matthew wrote, good Saint Joseph slept with his fathers is the general and sure conclusion from the outcry in Nazareth, "Is not this the son of Mary?" Therefore it was only from the blessed mother, who was then in the house of Saint John, in Jerusalem, that Saint Matthew could have known of the revelation made to Saint Joseph. And thus his gospel gives her witness to the Incarnation,\* indirectly yet as really as it is given in *her own gospel of the infancy*.† He also gives

the word "Jesus." Alford, Wordsworth, and some others who will have γενεαίς in verse 18, give it the force of origin (*origo*), to force an agreement with verse 1.

Some of the fathers earnestly and eloquently give to Saint Matthew's copying of the phrase in Genesis the force given above. And the evidence that the holy evangelist did make that sublime allusion amounts to proof; for what has here been said of its force and meaning is the voice of the early Church uttered in decisive ways. Its general feeling comes out when Saint Chrysostom says things such as these: "Wherefore is this gospel called the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, while it hath not the birth only but the whole dispensation? Because that is the sum of the whole, the origin and root of all our blessings. For it is beyond all hope and all expectation, that God should become man." And in another place he says, Isaiah proclaiming his passion and admiring who Christ was and what he became, cried out loud and clear, *Who shall declare his generation?*

\* As to the historic reasons for the reticence of Saint Matthew as to the blessed mother, and of Saint Mark also, see *Thoughts*, Part ii.

† What is here said has the countenance of some Protestant divines. Plumptre speaks of "the difference in the language and style" of Saint Luke's first two chapters and "all that follows," of "*the marked Hebrew stamp* of the narrative of the nativity." He asks, "Was Saint Luke incorporating a Hebrew record?" and then, inquiring where it came from, he says, "From some of those devout women who must have lived for years in closest contact with "the blessed mother, and

the witness of the angel to the Incarnation, and the promise thereof, revealed in all its fullness to the prophet Isaiah.

Saint Matthew's solicitude ever to combine the revelation of Christ's coming to all the world with that of his coming to the Jews may have been one with other reasons why he brought in that prophecy just here; for on reading down through the Hebraic genealogy to the promise of the angel, "He shall save his people," it would seem to be restricted to the Hebrews did not the prophecy give a world-breadth to the promise.

In the two chapters of Saint Matthew's introduction the humiliation of our Lord is blended with his glory. In its second chapter the extent of his kingdom in time and space is intimated, and there it is revealed that not only were deep foundations laid for his kingdom in the life of Israel, but that its foundations were deep laid in the life of man. In that distant cycle of time in which strange languages were developed, and

who were known to Saint Luke at Antioch or elsewhere. "From them and through them may have come *from her* that which we may well call *the true gospel of the infancy.*"

Bishop Ellicott says: "We can perhaps hardly go so far as Lange and positively find in the recital a diction that belongs rather to a woman than a man, but when we mark the specialities of the narrative we seem perfectly justified in believing—a belief with which the peculiarities of the diction seem fully to coincide—that we have here partly, perhaps in substance, partly *in precise terms*, a record that came mediately or immediately *from the lips of the Virgin herself, her Son's first evangelist.*"

Such scholastic comments on the style of the narrative are of interest, but in and of itself nothing can be more plain to common sense than that what is told in Saint Luke's gospel could have come only from the blessed mother.

the tower-builders, who carried in their dispersion relics of the religion saved with Noah and preserved in the line of Shem, were scattered over the earth, in the darkening close of that first historic cycle, Balaam, the guilty and last prophet of the once sacred East, beheld in vision and foretold the star of our Lord. That star was visible at the opening of another great cycle of time. It was seen by Gentiles of the Dispersion in the plain of Babylon, that great city which is the Bible-symbol of the glory and of the judgment of the world. It was seen at the incarnation of Him who set luminaries in the heavens "*for times and seasons.*" Then the light of that star first shone into the sky of man's world. There it is shining now, and there it will shine until the heavens pass away—the witness in nature to our Lord's dominion over the orbs of heaven.

There, too, is the strange fact, foretokening and prophesying of something yet to come, that the birth of their predicted Saviour and King was made known by Gentiles to the Jews. And there, through Jewish Scripture, Gentiles find Christ with his mother; and by offerings of a significance greater than they knew,\* and by their worship, they prophesy of his rule over all nations and of his mercy for all. And those teaching Gentiles recall the grace of old to some who were not of Abraham's race, and were of the race of Cyrus the Persian, who heard and obeyed the command of God to rebuild his temple in Jerusalem.

\*Gold for a king, frankincense to God, myrrh to one who was to die, the fathers saw in their gifts; and the Church has always believed and taught that in them there was a mystic and prophetic meaning.

BUT with some reason it may be said that in the earliest gospel the starry pilgrimage was sure to be told, and that, however told, its lessons would be plain and instructive, and so there is no certainty that Saint Matthew perceived how well fitted was the story for the opening of the plan of his great argument and for all that was to follow in his holy gospel. But this does not give due weight to Saint Matthew's giving to that cycle of events so long a chapter in so short a gospel.

VI. In that long chapter he relates what he did not witness; and here let us consider his style. Straight-forward and clear, it is the outgrowth of a strong and self-forgetting nature. There is no ornament,\* and none is required. Carved work is suitable on frail marble, not on hard granite. And the facts and truths of the Holy Scripture are so grand that ornament would not adorn. The style is swift as the brooks in Lebanon. Events come thick and fast, but there is no crowding. Much is told in a few words, as in the first line. Each word has its own place, each word tells—as in the line “when they saw the young Child and his mother they worshiped him.”† Not a word can be spared or changed. By rendering the East and the Far-East, Saint Matthew's two geographic terms for two distinct regions, by the same word, the meaning of one has been obscured, that of the other hidden and lost. And a whole volume of history was closed to

\* The touching figure of Rachel is not an exception. See *The Star*, pp. 324, 325.

† I would that my readers might consult the essay on language in *The Star*, pp. 91–107, marking the italicized sentences.

much\* of the English-speaking world by substituting "wise men," a vague, unhistoric phrase, for Magi, a name of historic meaning.

Saint Matthew's style is not as graceful as Saint Luke's, nor so graphic as Saint Peter's. His descriptive talent is unique. Paradoxically, he may be said to reach the soul through the senses without touching the senses. He pictures for the mind rather than the eye. By clear drawing rather than by colors, by true and fine insight into the specific nature and causes of things, by something he borrowed of no one and which none will ever borrow from him, he so fixes the volatile spirit of things that their soul becomes visible.

VII. In his introduction Saint Matthew pre-intimates the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. He foreshadows in historic guise what Saint John said—"He came to his own, and his own received him not." In his introduction there is a foreboding of evil. Jerusalem is "troubled," and Bethlehem is in mourning. The blessed mother flees by night to the heathen land of Egypt. The holy family returns to Judea, but there Saint Joseph is not free from trouble. In the introduction are points of light of the utmost brilliancy; but the coloring is somber, and of this the last touch is, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

In the first verse of the opening of this holy gospel

\*The Vulgate kept Saint Matthew's word. For historic and geographic names such is the proper usage. If there *were* some excuse for the paraphrase of the word in our received version *now* there is none. Yet a *late translation (miscalled a revision)* is false to the Greek, here and as to Saint Matthew's two geographic terms.



and in the last verse there is the grasp of the hand of God. Into its last verse there is compressed all the foreboding of Messianic prophecy and all the pity and the shame of the thirty years in Nazareth with its wild brood of border ruffians. And this marvelous summing up of a whole volume of prophecy is designedly in keeping with the tone of the introduction. For there is another volume of prophecy, or, rather, there is a brighter side to its one volume; and had the Holy Child, with all regal honors, dwelt in the golden shadow of the temple the inspired evangelist might have written, He dwelt in Jerusalem, that the words of the prophets might be fulfilled, *He shall be called a son of David*.

With no preface like Saint Luke's, no prelude like Saint John's, Saint Matthew's holy gospel suddenly opens with fullness of strength. Now, on looking onward we see that as it begins, so in like manner it ends. And this similarity in its opening and close is fair evidence that this holy gospel was written by one and the same evangelist.

VIII. A solemn undertone of stern and sad foreboding is heard in its first two chapters. The earliest gospel of the infancy has not the warm color, the sunny atmosphere of the blessed mother's; though the last reveals that the Holy Child "is set for the falling of many," and that "a sword shall pierce the soul of the mother." This contrast should be kept in mind in considering a charge of variance between the holy gospels of Saint Luke and Saint Matthew, which bears as hard against them as any other, a charge of variance growing out of the silence of the later gospel as to the course of events initiated by the

coming of the Magi \*—a charge that does not touch the second or the last gospel, as they have no gospels of the infancy. It has often been truly said in explanation and defense of the silence of Saint Luke that nothing could be added to the full narrative of Saint Matthew; but the time-order of the two gospels is indispensable to that argument; and the facts, also, that Saint Matthew's gospel was written only a few years after the resurrection and was read in the public worship of all Christians. Then it is clear that as both the oral gospel and the apostolic gospel of Saint Matthew were so well known Saint Luke may have written nothing as to that cycle of facts—the coming of the Magi, the murder of the innocents, and the exile—just as Saint Mark wrote nothing of the signs and wonders at Christ's birth, because every body knew them. And were Saint Luke now to come among us he would have to forget the times he lived in before he could apprehend the charge of variance between the two gospels.

Therefore it may seem that no more need be said, and yet more that is much to the point can be

\* Strauss, in his epoch-making summing up (A. D. 1834) of all that had been brought against the historic accuracy of the gospels, strongly stated this charge in a clear and lawyer-like way. Strauss now is little read; but those who take this to be satisfactory evidence that unbelief in the gospels is losing ground do not understand that books are most effective when people cease to read them because they have lost the charm of novelty and their ideas are in the air.

For the bearings of one especial purpose of Saint Luke in framing his gospel, upon the question to be considered, see Part iii, chap. vi, of the *Thoughts*. And some latent correspondences between Saint Luke's narrative and that of Saint Matthew are noted in Part ii, chap. v.

said, and for the first time in all the long controversy as to the holy gospels. For hitherto the defense has been that there was no more need to repeat the coming of the Magi than to repeat the dream of Saint Joseph ; but still it does look strange that Saint Luke makes no allusion whatever to the great cycle of facts in Saint Matthew's second chapter ; and this strangeness cannot be done away by any merely negative reason or explanation. But for this a positive reason can be given. It is found in the intent and character of the opening of Saint Luke's gospel as contrasted with Saint Matthew's. Saint Luke wrote in the thickest of the war which was waged against Saint Paul by many Christians who still were fettered and trammelled by Judaism ; and, divinely inspired to conciliate the Jewish element in the Christian congregations, he made no allusion to the "trouble" of Jerusalem at the tidings of the Magi, to the going forth of the pilgrims unattended and alone, to the murders, or the exile. By the ordaining will of God, and through the evangel of the blessed mother, the picture of the old religion in the opening of Saint Luke's gospel is in vivid contrast to that in Saint Matthew's. The one is lit up with the light of morning, the other is a night-picture, with its darkness relieved by the brightness of the star of the Lord. In the one the presentation of the old religion is wondrously attractive. In the other it is almost repellent. For while common sense readily honors the sign in nature of the Incarnation of the Lord of Nature, and good hearts welcome God's making known the mercy for every land, it is shameful that the holy city heard with fright the tidings of the

birth of the Holy Child. It is strange that it heard this from strangers! And the discourtesy of the sacred conclave, its lack even of curiosity, in suffering those princely heralds to go forth alone and unattended to find the Christ, that too indeed is strange! And so much of all this was shameful to the Jews that Saint Luke was silent as to all this cycle of facts. Any allusion to it would have spoiled the brilliant color of his opening. And he could be silent, for it was known to all.

To have combined in one picture those in Jerusalem who were "looking for redemption" and those who were "troubled" at the Messiah's birth would not have suited the immediate design of either evangelist. In one and the same picture Turner could not have painted a landscape in the gloom of a stormy night and in the glad light of a perfect day. Each evangelist could have painted two pictures; but two greater masters of style never lived, and those great masters were not suffered to fail by attempting too much.

## SAINT MATTHEW'S INTRODUCTION—CONTINUED.

## CHAPTER II.

IN the earliest of the holy gospels the sharpness of the conflict with evil is felt at once. There the life of Christ begins in shame and sorrow and danger: Saint Joseph is troubled, the boys of Bethlehem are murdered, the holy family flees to a heathen land!

Thence onward sin confronts the Sinless, until crucified is the only One of women born who ever actualized his own ideal. And if for him man would not forego his nature, and God changed not the hard decree, who can hope to be free from trouble?

Why evil exists may pass our intelligence; or, possibly, its reason may lie at our feet unseen because looked for in the depths or in the heights. But its reason, whether too difficult or too plain, is not revealed. Yet to this secret a tenth part of Hebrew Scripture is given—the book of Job teaching that afflictions are not signs of guilt; Ecclesiastes teaching that the pleasures of this world are “vanity and vexation,” and that it is the sum of wisdom to fear God and keep his commandments; and the book of Proverbs, which offers to the young the guidance of the experience of the old.\* Thus the Hebrew

\* That is what Isaac Nordheimer told me when asked if the reason for evil was revealed; and, as *The Church and Science* is out of print, I repeat this note on its twenty-ninth page: “As we were

Scriptures, though not revealing the reason for the divine permission of sin, deal kindly and practically with the temptations and dangers in the journey of life.

II. Evil and sin are often confounded, but they are not the same. Neither are pain and evil. To the cheery village blacksmith kindling up the forge, plunging the red-hot iron into hissing water, hammering, twisting, shaping, nailing the shoe to guard the hoof, the fright and distress of the horse are no evil. And when the word *evil* is used merely in the sense of pain it should be sharply distinguished from sin. For the mystery is not the permission of evil, regarded as suffering only, but in the permission of sin. Suffering may be remedial. It may be a means to good. In sin there is nothing remedial. Never is sin a means to good. Sin is self-retributive, but is not self-destructive. Pain may wear itself out, but sin never does. Sin begets only sin.\* It is ever begetting sin. Only through the power and mercy of our sin-hating God does sin ever come to an end.

Through the atonement for sin, "finished" on Calvary, God "can be just and the justifier of sinners." Yet from the days of Anselm until now the searchers

traveling from Munich to Augsburg a noble-looking man of great age began talking. He inquired after Nordheimer, and was delighted to hear of the esteem in which he was held by scholars of our country. Then sadly he said, 'He used to write to me, but in two or three years there is nothing.' I had to tell of his early death. And big tears rolled down his cheeks as the old man cried, 'Nordheimer, O, Nordheimer! *he was my best pupil.*' Then straightening up, '*I taught him Arabic,*' he said, and not another word."

\* Saint Clement of Alexandria says, "I shall show throughout the whole of these *Stromata*" (his miscellaneous writings, Book i, chap. i) "that evil has an evil nature and can never turn out the producer of any thing that is good."



into this mystery fail to find out how this can be. And they deserve to fail, for "they bring to the foot of the cross their systems instead of their sorrows." Not more certain would be the facts if we knew *how* the Lamb of God so taketh away the sin of the world that God can be "the justifier of sinners;" nor would such knowledge medicine our hurt. At the foot of the Cross knowledge finds her life in losing it, in rising from knowledge into adoration.

III. A man with no conviction of guilt, no wish to cease from sinning, no desire to be justified, hears with unintelligent coldness of Him who, "being in the form of God," came in the form of man "to be our righteousness;" but if with all the heat and force of his soul a man longs to be free, not from sin's punishment only, but from sinning, he sees with unerring intuition and feels in the depths of his soul that these things cannot be unless there be a Divine Saviour.

Some philosophers ridicule the possibility of the Incarnation; yet in the heathen worlds there has generally been the belief that at times the gods have appeared in the shape of men. No doubt the heathen are heathenish; and yet with them there are visible signs and tokens of God in nature. Voices and monitions of conscience by them are heard. They have some reminiscences of the truth, and are not without whisperings and persuasions of the Spirit, for Christ "enlighteneth every man who cometh into the world.\*"

\* By their comparative study of the world's religions infidels are now forcing Christians to think of this verse. Yet the truth they are bringing to mind was well understood in the early Christian ages, as can be proved by words of Saint Clement of Alexandria, of Saint Chrysostom, Saint Augustine, and others.

Without a desire for some kind of communion between the divine and the human and a belief in the possibility of such communion there can be no religion. In all times and places there has been religion in some form or other. To this India and Egypt loudly witness. And in this there is invincible evidence of the human yearning of the soul for the divine, and of the human belief in the possibility of its gratification.

Some Germaniac philosophers deny the being of God and the soul of man, affirming that godless, soulless man is differentiated from the mute creation only by the faculty of speech; yet in some of such philosophizing there is a witness to that aspiration for the divine which is the human characteristic—and a most horrible witness—for it holds that the world-making force, even He who is the living God, knows only in and through us, that insensate force coming to consciousness in man. Those blasphemers touch the limit and bound of human guilt! For their God awakens only to the feeble intelligence of man, feels only what man feels, revolting and debasing as his feelings so often are! And yet, even in such wickedness, there is the soul's ineradicable longing for the divine; even in Satan's last delusion he is made to confess that the human nature is prefigured to the revelation of Emmanuel—God with us.

Skeptics say that the evidence of Christ's divinity in the worship of him by his disciples is weakened by the historic fact that in their time as well as long before there was a wide-spread belief in incarnations—that is, that gods had come down to earth in the likeness of men. In support of their argument more might have been made of the divine honor and worship

decreed to living Cæsars; and more might have been made of the speculations of the Gnostics, who at a *somewhat later day* \* enrolled Jesus among the Æons—that is, among supposed emanations of the Divine Essence.

For though Gnosticism is usually put later than the Christian era, yet if there ever was a Gnostic such was Simon Magus, who in the days of the apostles gave himself out as “the power and wisdom of God.” For the pretensions of Simon, Oriental fantasies and Gnostic reveries as really opened the way in Samaria as afterward and elsewhere they did for the marvels told of Apollonius of Tyana. And Simon Magus never could have been without molding influences long before at work; so strange a plant could only have grown and thriven in a soil long preparing.

Therefore, to the assertion considered, the reply † that the idea of man-worship could not have entered the fenced and guarded precincts of the Hebrew mind is not absolutely conclusive, for side by side with the Hebrew religion in all of Palestine, save the land of Judea, there were heathen religions, and all the Jews

\* This is important; for *those* Gnostics were Christian apostates; and the earlier Oriental origin of their heresies has so been overlooked that some of the higher critics stalking about in the field of history, and falling in with the full-blown Gnosticism of the second century, and taking no account of the time for its growth, and giving to words of Saint Paul broader reference to gnosticism in its maturity than his words will bear, have questioned the true date of certain of Saint Paul's epistles! A wiser view of the age, growth, and Oriental elements in Gnostic speculation is briefly taken in *The Gnostics and Their Remains, Ancient and Mediæval*, by C. W. King, of Trinity College, London, 1864.

† Of Neander and others.

within Palestine, as well as those without, knew \* of the Gentile belief in the companionship of gods and men as set forth in both Oriental and classic myths and fables.

Some of those fables were health-giving and beautiful. Most of them were shameful; and they cannot begin to account for what the holy evangelists tell. Equally unhistorical is the notion that it was a consequence of Hebrew prophecy.† The portraiture of Christ Jesus could no more have come from the holy visions of the rapt seers of Israel than out of Homer's dreams Achilles could have walked forth in armor clad, and, silent armies looking on, have killed great Hector in the plain of Troy.

There is no trace of the mythical or of the legendary in the bitter, humble, human trial of good Saint Joseph. Sin had seemed to come very nigh to good Saint Joseph in a very trying form. When the sin of another comes up before a good soul, then, with his knowledge of the guilt and pity for the sinner, there comes a deeper sense of his own sinfulness. The angel shaped his words to the sleeper's trouble; and yet their brief but clear prophecy of the office-work of the Son of the blessed Virgin is a mark and sign of their heavenly origin.

\* The influence of the Oriental and of the classic worlds on the Hebrews has been underrated; just as there has been an underrating of the influence of the Jews upon the Romans and the Greeks. As to that, consult the learned treatise, *Judaism at Rome*, B. C. 76-A. D. 140, by F. Huidekoper, New York, 1867.

† In his *Life of Jesus* Strauss carried this theory so far that it defeated itself; but as since modified its influence now appears in criticisms by the semi-orthodox upon citations of Messianic prophecy by the evangelists as bearing upon their inspiration.

IV. Some are born to trouble monarchs with the fear of change, some are born to uphold the guarded order of states, some in nature's "infinite book of secrecy to read a little;" but never was a man born to "save from sin." *That* is the prerogative of God, and, therefore, the office-work of Christ Jesus as really sets him apart from man as the mystery of his birth. God only can forgive sin, for all sin is sin against God. In words that sounded strangely to the family of murdered Uriah King David cried, "Against thee, O God, thee only, have I sinned;" and when the soul awakens to full consciousness and conviction of guilt the sinner, for a time, loses sight of the earthly evil consequences of his evil-doing and only feels that he has sinned against the Holy Spirit. The penitent will at last come to a bitter sense of the evils that follow his wrong-doing; yet in David-like contrition, in "the true repentance not to be repented of," at first he simply says, I have done wrong. He may turn back some of the on-goings of his wrong-doing—more than pay the debt; but the wrong-doer can do nothing that rightly and fully relieves his conscience of the feeling, pure and simple, that he has sinned. *That* Christ Jesus can do through his atonement in Gethsemane and on Calvary.

The pride of some refuses salvation as a gift. If they cannot work it out for themselves they will have none of it. To the intellectual conceit of some its mystery is "*the offense of the cross.*" And now it is often held that if a sinner repents and sins no more God "does not require the past." There is no Scripture *for that*. That cannot forever lull to sleep the indestructible sense of justice, which, awakening in the soul in

the spiritual world, would make the soul a hell forever. Only in Christ Jesus can God be just and the justifier of sinners. And justification is not a mere pardon. It is not a forgiving which implies a forgetting that is impossible with God.

“Our iniquity was laid on Him who was made sin for us,” and, though great the mystery and the mercy of his Incarnation, greater is that of his sacrificial death. “There is no reason to think that any thing similar has ever occurred or will ever again occur in the annals of eternity. *It stands amidst the lapse of ages and the waste of worlds a single and solitary monument.*” \*

In these eloquent words there is more than eloquence! There is the truth without which there can be no sufficient comprehension of our holy religion, the great truth that *here on this earth as nowhere else* † the being and the mercy of God are revealed, “that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

V. At the cradle of the Virgin-born, looking forward to the life so mysteriously begun, we see that such a birth calls for such a life, and that for such a life there must have been a superhuman birth. Each fact requires the other. Each fact proves the other. Yet the imagination is powerless to forecast the life of Jesus.

\* Robert Hall's great sermon “On the Substitution of the Innocent for the Guilty.”

† As to this, see in *The star of Our Lord* the chapters “On the Relation of the Universe to Christ,” and “On the Astronomical Doubt as to Christianity.”



With the thought of humanity there comes the thought of weakness, with the thought of divinity that of power. The one brings with it the thought of sin, the other of holiness; the one of things that are of to-day, the other of what is, "world without end." Yet those two ideas of humanity and divinity blend and unite in Christ Jesus. The one cannot be forgotten in the other. The divine glory never hides the lineaments of the man. Even in the weakness of tears, the agonies of death, the humanity hides not the present God. This portrait of Christ Jesus could not have been without an archetype. And men could not have portrayed this Son of God and Son of man without help from on high.

Over the earth a breath of redemption has passed. In the heart of man there has awakened a desire for peace within—peace with nature, peace with an ever-wakeful Providence. The angel's promise suits the unspoken, imprisoned desire; and, joining to the promise of the angel the truth that the Holy Child is Emmanuel, God with us, the Holy Spirit sent forth the two truths together.

## CHAPTER III.

## JOHN THE BAPTIST—THE BAPTISM.

“IN those days came John the Baptist.” \* This points back to what in the verse before Saint Matthew gave as evidence of the reproach and shame forewritten of the Christ by all the prophets, namely, that he grew up to fullness of manhood in the wild and wicked town of Nazareth. And it is also in harmony with the tone of Saint Matthew’s introduction that he selects only such of the sayings of the Baptist *as mark the evil of the time*. On comparing his portraiture of John with that of Saint Luke this intent comes out clearly; and it is also seen that Saint Matthew may pass over what is not strictly in the line of his immediate purpose.

I. Before a king a herald goes. The dawn comes before the day. The new grows out of the old. An age that is passing away has some foresight of the age that is to come.

By telling nothing of the Baptist’s birth and previous life the inspired evangelist gives to the utmost the true effect of such things in the coming of the prophet. And yet this sudden and very strange apparition of John troubles the historic sense, till

\* Saint Matthew’s quiet assumption of a knowledge of John (and Saint Mark’s also) is a sign of the date of their gospels; for so men write of persons well known in their own day.

what may now be learned from the gospel of Saint Luke, and when Saint Matthew wrote was known from the oral gospel and in other ways, is well understood and considered. As long as old Herod lived or Archelaus ruled, the signs and wonders at the birth of John endangered the child's life in Judea. Well the old priest Zacharias knew this, and for this cause the boy was brought up, ἐν ταῖς ἐρήμοις, in the deserts which sweep around the hilly shores of southern and western Palestine, in that ocean of sand which comes up almost to Hebron,\* near which was the town Judah, where the priest lived. There the marvelous boy was safe in the black tents of some friendly or kindred sheik of the neighboring Ishmaelitish tribes; and there Saint Luke tells that "he lived till the day of his showing unto Israel."† This accounts for the raiment of camel's hair, the leathern girdle, the locusts and wild honey, and for the likeness of John in dress and manner of life to Elijah. The older prophet came of those two tribes and a half who chose to dwell beyond Jordan *in tents*. And that Elijah in manner of life was an Arab is known, when, tightening the leathern girdle around his loins, he runs on foot before the horses of the king, not as we should picture a prophet, yet in true Arab fashion; and, again, when for rest

\* The rabbins fix on Hebron as the dwelling-place of Zacharias in a way that shows some connection between the two places.

† Whether noted before or not, *Saint Luke's plural cannot point to any thing in Palestine*. It suits only the desert region near which Zacharias lived. There two arms of the great desert of Arabia stretched out, one to the south, the other to the east of Palestine. For them the plural naturally would be used, as they are distinct, though not disconnected. And this view of Saint Luke's meaning is confirmed by John's raiment and mode of life.

he runs far away down into the great desert of Sinai.\*

Out of the same desert John came into the north-eastern canton of Palestine. There his cry was first heard in the wild and barren waste that toward the east looks down upon the accursed sea of Sodom, in the howling "wilderness of Judea," where no water is.† He began to baptize at the lowest ford of the Jordan, not far from the Dead Sea and from Jericho. Thence he journeyed up the river-bank to the ford at Bethabara,‡ below the Sea of Galilee. Then, above that sea he went to northern Bethany. And when thus the cry of John had gone forth from the mouth of the sacred river to its mountain springs, from the south to the north of the Holy Land, *then he baptized Jesus at northern Bethany.* §

II. Saint Luke records the Baptist's wise and kindly counsel to publicans against greed, to soldiers against robbery and mutiny; the last evangelist remembers words about Christ, warm from the heart of his old master, which he heard in his youth. It is plain, then, that Saint Matthew does not try to give a complete

\* Deutsch (in papers which in 1869 kindled up an interest in the Talmud that has not died out) states that "the Talmud shows a rather unexpected familiarity with Arab manners." That, however, admits of ready explanation; and he says, "To indicate one curious point, the prophet Elijah, who appears there as a kind of tutelary genius, goes about in the garb of an Arab;" but that, readily and naturally, came from what is told of Elijah in Hebrew Scripture.

† Save a single spring, where then were Essenes.

‡ This is not stated in the gospels. But it was natural for him to do so; and a tradition which located John at that ford also was why Origen, in John i, 28, substituted Bethabara for Bethany, incorrectly. Conder says the name Bethabara still clings to the ford.

§ See Appendix to this chapter, No. 1.

idea of the teachings or of the character of John. He reads off the proclamation of the king before he describes the herald, and thus puts John in his proper place of subordination. The specimens of his preaching that he selects are characteristic ; but, as Saint Luke gives the same, probably they are from the oral gospel. Though few and short they are such as prove that the preacher was a natural and powerful orator ; as this : " Say not, ye have Abraham to our fathers : God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham ; " and this : " The ax is laid at the root of the tree "—a figure fraught with the sound of loud blows and the fall of the oak in the stillness of the woods.

In the bitter " O, generation of vipers " Saint Matthew's choice of sayings that deepen and prolong our sense of the evil of the time reaches its climax. In Saint Luke those words are said to the crowd ; in Saint Matthew they are said to the scribes and Pharisees ; and this is the more significant because he does not again bring them in till much later on. And in no elaborate treatise on the scribes and Pharisees is their character and spirit so well set forth as in the stern surprise, the withering sarcasm, of "*Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ?*" Those hypocrites came down from walled Jerusalem—where John would never go—to snare the preacher in the open field, and his words to them pre-intimate much of the future. For the herald's flinging down the gage of battle is a forewarning that the king's war with the wicked rulers in the land cannot be put off. It means that the war has actually begun, and that, without truce or compromise, open, bitter war will go on to the end.

It is often insisted that it is wiser and better to allure with hope than to coerce with fear, that the Saviour came with words of mercy and love, and that an overzealous enforcing of the unwelcome consequences of sin is to be deprecated. In this there may be something; and yet the Baptist preached repentance and warning. With fires of doom flashing from his eyes the herald of the Christ proclaimed "*a King who would burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*"

III. More remarkable than the Baptist's untaught eloquence, unfearing zeal, his sincerity and singleness of heart, or the hold he had on the conviction of the people, is the clearness with which he knew what he had to do and the thoroughness with which he did his work. Of himself Saint Paul only could say, "I have finished my course;" but he said, "John fulfilled his course;" and to John alone the Bible gives such praise.\*

His intelligent humility, his self-forgetting spirit, which felt and owned he was not worthy to unloose the latchets of the shoes of the Messiah, with his great office of herald set him apart from other men; yet surely no one unaided of the Holy Spirit could have given a true idea of the effect of the coming of the Baptist. And yet in this the historic quality of Saint Matthew's soul may clearly be seen. We may gaze on a painting with thoughts far away, we may play our part like an actor on the stage while all around us is unreal, or may come, like a disembodied spirit, into living sympathy with the soul of a thing. Now, with the power given him to awaken that sym-

\* Acts xiii, 25. The thought here is from a sermon by Robert Hall.



pathy, Saint Matthew reproduces the effect of the startling apparition of the Baptist. He does this by no word-painting or dramatic art. He does this by a silence more effective than speech, by a bold handling of his materials, by a few simple touches, in a way peculiarly his own. Silence as to the wonders at the birth of John, silence as to his previous life, were indispensable to the making John come forever, as he came "*in those days.*" And in Saint Matthew's inspired gospel he so comes that at every great epoch when the Lord is drawing nigh to man, and strange things are coming to pass on the earth, the shade of the Baptist seems to press before him, sternly crying in the wilderness of the world, "REPENT! THE KINGDOM IS AT HAND!"

#### OF THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST JESUS.

In his revelations of the baptism, and of the temptation as well, Saint Matthew may have had in mind the oral gospel, of which he was one of the framers, and probably he had; yet in each there seems to be something that is characteristic. Thus, as usual, passing over minor facts so that the greater are the more impressive, he says nothing of the lesser temptations in the forty days, or of the "wild beasts."

At the baptism he gives the voice of God saying to John, "This is my beloved Son;" and he gives this voice only. This needs to be thought of; for, inasmuch as here the words from heaven are not the same as in the gospels of Saint Luke and Saint Mark, many say this difference disproves the Christian doctrine of inspiration. This seeming argument they hold to be unanswerable. And yet the answer is on the face of

the record ; for in the revelation in Saint Matthew the voice says to John, "*This is my beloved Son ;*" in the later gospels the voice speaking to Jesus says, "*Thou art my beloved Son.*"

And though at first look it may seem as if somewhat of the divine assurance to Jesus was withheld when Saint Matthew gives only one of the voices, yet that is cared for when he reveals that unto Jesus "the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending and lighting upon him." Each of the voices of God speak of Christ Jesus as "my beloved Son ;" and, though the reticence in this case is hardly to be looked for, still it is in keeping with the characteristic brevity of inspired oracles that Saint Matthew gives but one of the two voices. He *may* have chosen the one he did, because John was there *to witness for the human race*. And as he had testified to what the voice said to himself, Saint Luke and Saint Mark were content with giving only what the voice said to Jesus.

II. The gospels are not memoirs, biographies, or histories. Of *thirty years* of the life of Jesus they tell nothing, save only in twelve verses in Saint Luke ; and, saying not a word as to how he looked, they leave much to the imagination, when Jesus in the fullness of manhood goes forth out of Nazareth and comes to the Baptist at the springs of the Jordan.

Yet so great is their suggestiveness that their records are often much more complete than at first they seem to be. Thus, while it is not probable that John heard from his parents, then stricken in years, of the marvels at his birth, it is probable that of them he heard something from others, and also of the marvels at

the birth of Jesus. And when the earnest gaze of the piercing eyes of the prophet was fixed on the peaceful face of Jesus by passion untroubled, unscarred by sin, and when his heart had stirred and burned as he communed with him, his feeling that he could not baptize Jesus is consistent and natural, although the promised sign had not been given, and therefore he could not surely have known that Jesus was "the Lamb of God."

Many of the discussions of the *rationale* of the baptism are trivial and needless; for our Lord said, "It becometh us to fulfill" all right-doing. John's baptism, though not commanded by the law of Moses, was a divine ordinance, for John was a prophet. And there was the same reason for our Lord's complying with it as with some other sacred rites. Whatever other meanings John's baptism may have had for the people, it was a public profession that henceforth the lives of those baptized were to be given to the service of God in a way more open than before; and may it not have had somewhat of that meaning to our Saviour, who, so far as might be, ever became one with his brethren—though his Scriptures never forget the distinction and difference here indicated by a single word, "Suffer it to be so *now*?"

III. Then the old religion laid its hand in blessing on the head of the new. And when the noblest subject of the law submits to the rite of baptism at the hands of its last prophet it almost seems to symbolize the burying of the law itself beneath the wave of time.

That righteousness "fulfilled," and after Jesus came up out of the water, then, *and not till then*,

signs and wonders were given. Then, in a visible form, the Spirit of God came down from the opened \* heavens. The Spirit took to himself the form of a bird—not the bird of

“ The pride and ample pinion  
Which the Theban eagle bear,  
Sailing with supreme dominion  
Through the azure deep of air ”—

bird of sharp beak and cruel eye, borne on tattered banners through the clouds of battle—the Spirit came in the form of a dove, taking to himself the emblem in nature of gentle, faithful, domestic love.† Thick darkness shrouded the barren rock when, with thunderings and lightnings on Sinai, God came down to legislate for a sinning world. Now he descends by the springs of a peaceful river in the form of a dove. The dove rests on a man. There is a voice from heaven, saying, “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And these three signs are promises of a union between God and man beyond all human hope or human thought—the union lost in the garden of Eden, more than found in the garden of Gethsemane!

\* Saint Peter says the heavens were *rent*—the word he used in saying “ the veil of the temple was rent in twain.” There, Saint Matthew and Saint Luke also have the word *rent*.

† Saint Chrysostom asks, “ Why in the form of a dove? Gentle is that creature and pure. And besides the evangelist is reminding us of an ancient history. For when once a common shipwreck had overtaken the whole world, and our race was in danger of perishing, this creature appeared and indicated the deliverance from the tempest, and, bearing an olive-branch, published the good tidings of the common calm of the whole world (Gen. viii, 10-12). All of which was a type of things to come.”

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III.

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 No. 1, PAGE 49.

In Holy Scripture slight hints mean so much, one thing so points to another, its truths and facts, when rightly seen and rightly put together, so fit to each other, and so open wider and wider, that in its study there is a charm, a growing insight, and a certainty resembling and more pleasing than that which charms the scientists in their study of nature. Thus the holy gospels ever encourage and reward a thoughtful, prayerful, loving communion—the trying, as Ruskin says we should try, “to make ourselves present as if in the body at every recorded event in our Redeemer’s life.”

In the wilderness of Judea, where water is hardly to be found, Saint Matthew says that John came “*preaching*,” and that he baptized in the Jordan. His first naming those who came from the holy city, and Saint Mark’s idiomatic “Jerusalemites,” point to the ford near Jericho. They came down a wild and strange ravine, the scene of the parable of the good Samaritan, by a road which in some ten or eleven miles descends some three thousand feet from the heights of Jerusalem to the plain of Jericho.

There John began baptizing: and, Saint Luke says, “He came into all the country about Jordan.” Saint Matthew also says, “there went out unto him *all the region round about Jordan*.” And it should be noted that he so puts the baptism of Christ after his description of the character and work of the Baptist as to give the impression that the baptism was not till some time after the course of the Baptist had begun—as really was the case. An inference to the same effect, which agrees with the fact, may be drawn from Saint Mark’s saying after what he has told of John, “*It came to pass in those days that Jesus came and was baptized.*”

Our Lord was not in haste to go to John. He waited till the cry of the Baptist had told on all the land. The deputation of priests and Levites who came (and evidently not at a very early day) to ask John, “Who art thou?” found him at a place called Bethany. Jesus was there at the time, which was after his baptism and temptation; and *it was there* that John had baptized him, and not, as commonly said,

at the ford near Jericho. This comes out on comparing John i, 18, x, 40,\* and Matt. xix, 1. Those three Scriptures speak of the same place; the second points back to the first, and the third locates it in "the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan." Now, Judea proper had no coasts beyond Jordan. Not a rood of that province was west of the river. And Josh. xix, 33, proves that what are called the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan were in what afterward was Gaulonitis, and now is Jolan. Far away from the province of Judea, it had no geographical connection with it; and it was near the northern boundary of the Holy Land.

Several considerations confirm the conclusion that Christ Jesus was there baptized. The baptism could hardly have been at the ford near Jericho, as its distance from Cana of Galilee is almost too great for the time of our Lord's journey to the wedding-feast. It was not at the ford below the Sea of Galilee, for the name of that ford was Bethabara. Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus while in "the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan" that Lazarus was sick, and Saint John's minute statement, that the village named Bethany, where they lived, "was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifty furlongs off," does not comport with the gravity of the narrative until it is known that there was another place of the same name far to the north, and that Jesus was called from the one to the other.

Three days of his youth were so fastened in the memory of the aged Saint John that he speaks of one day, then of the next, and of the day following, also spoken of as the third day. On that day Jesus went from the place where he had been baptized to Cana of Galilee, as he could do in a day, the distance being about twenty miles. On his way Jesus findeth Philip, who was of Bethsaida, a village on his road to Cana. All taken together, these things establish the fact that our Lord was baptized in the mountain springs of the sacred river, and not in the Jordan near the sea of Sodom.

Caspari gives to Von Raumer the credit of pointing out the locality of the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan. I have made use of the treatise of the former, though his placing the wilderness where John came preaching in Gaulonitis, and the reason given for it, have nothing to support them. And my readers owe much to an essay "On the Scenes of the Baptist's Work," by Professor Benjamin B. Warfield.

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\*In John i, 18, the correct reading is Bethany, not Bethabara. Professor Warfield says, "The *πρώτον* of John x, 40, is of course relative to John's own narrative and refers back to i, 28."



Microscopic research into the meaning of the forms in which facts are stated in Scripture is tentative and more or less conjectural. All its results are open to questioning and to other ideas, and in such inquiries it is tempting and easy to imagine possibilities and to hold them for certainties; yet to do this is to emulate the conceit of those who presume to set aside the memory and knowledge of the Church on the authority of a misplaced accent, the shape of a dot, or the sleepiness of a tired copyist.

On the other hand, there are questions raised by such to which common sense at once gives a sure answer. Such have said that as the words of the voice from heaven are not the same in Saint Luke and Saint Mark that they are in Saint Matthew the two sacred recitals contradict each other. Some thirty years ago a professor in an orthodox biblical school gave up his belief in full inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; he honestly resigned his chair, and in a volume frankly setting forth what he thought were reasons for his apostasy (all of which he took from the gospels) he began with that charge. And in a more recent book on Inspiration a divine of orthodox reputation says, "*One or the other of those two forms of words is clearly wrong and must be given up.*"

Yet on reading those statements of the holy evangelists and stating the charge made against them to a young friend, with quick intelligence kindling in her eyes she at once said, "Why think of contradiction there? The Voice speaks to Jesus, and it speaks to John also." When asked if she had read that or thought of that before she said it came to her then, with the words, "*Thou art.*" "*This is.*" This shows the difference between hearts open to the truth in the Scriptures and hearts closed against it. And the seeming arguments against the full inspiration of the holy gospels are all as good as this one—that is, they are all good for nothing.

## CHAPTER IV.

## ON THE TEMPTATION.

IN the temptation of God manifest in the flesh *if there were no mystery there could be no truth*. It is a part of that divine conflict with sin and of man's redemption from sin, into which the highest angels desire to look, will forever desire to look, and will never see through it. And yet there is something like it in every human life. When youth comes to the gate of manhood and untried paths open before him is he not driven into solitude, to meditate, perchance to pray, and there to meet with Satan, the tempter of human kind? Remembering those decisive hours in after years, some weep the bitter tears of unavailing remorse; some the healing tears of holy penitence, praying to the Saviour "who was tempted in all points like unto us."

But while searching and plain lessons of the temptation of the Christ at some points touch us closely, *it stands apart*. And, with no vain purpose or wish to look through all of its mystery, I shall restrict myself to one proposition concerning it,\* which will be stated after correcting, by the luminous thinking of a great English divine, a *common* mistake as to the power of the tempter.

\* Yet much is to be thought of on comparing the gospels. To Christian minds that alone is enough to make it certain that Saint Matthew's gospel was earlier than Saint Mark's. By the reading of

"It has been said that to ascribe to Satan such an interference in the moral concerns of the world as is implied in his incessantly tempting men to sin is to suppose him *omnipresent*—a supposition repugnant to the nature of a finite being. It must be confessed the Scriptures of the New Testament teach us to conceive of satanic agency as concurring in almost every act of deliberate sin. To infer from thence, however, that any proper *omnipresence* is attributed to this apostate spirit betrays inattention to the obvious meaning of the inspired writers. We are taught to conceive of

his gospel on every Sabbath the brevity of Saint Mark's record of the temptation is accounted for; but had the second been the first gospel, unbelievers could argue that what in Saint Matthew's gospel is additional is legendary.

The additions and changes in Saint Luke account for his going over the ground again. There the Christ is tempted all the forty days; and, as Satan is the chief of "the rulers of the darkness of this world," the conclusion is that *from them* were the temptations of Jesus, till at last Satan himself put forth all the permitted fullness of his power.

Saint Matthew's own words prove that he gives the temptations in their time-order; yet, lest in the second temptation the subtlety of persuasion clothed in the disguise of trust in God should be underrated, the order *may* have been changed.

Minor differences there are; as to the stones, the words of the devil are not the same; yet how ready the suggestion that he said, "Command these stones," and also said even "this stone." "*It is written*" is once changed to "*it is said*;" and, on seeing this change when Christ was asked to worship Satan, how natural the impressive thought that the feeling of Jesus that what was written was God's word was then so strong that the Holy Spirit made the change to bring out the feeling!

When in Saint Luke's gospel the time-order was changed, when it was said that the temptation on the mountain passed in an instant, and when Saint Mark had said that in the desert Jesus was "with the wild beasts," then, in the gospel of Saint John, nothing could be added. The holy record was complete.

Satan as the head of a spiritual empire of great extent and comprehending within itself innumerable subordinate agents. The term Satan is invariably found in the singular number, implying that there is *one* designated by that appellation. His associates in the primeval rebellion are spoken of in the plural number, and are denominated his angels. What their number may be it is vain to conjecture; but when we reflect upon the extensive and complicated agency in which they are affirmed to be engaged we shall probably be inclined to conjecture that it far exceeds that of the human race.

“In describing the affairs of an empire it is the uniform custom of the historian to ascribe its achievements to one person, to the ruling mind under whose auspices they are performed and by whose authority they are effected; as it is the will of the chief, which in absolute monarchies gives unity to its operations and validity to its laws, and to whose glory or dishonor its good or ill fortune redound; as victories and defeats are ascribed to him who sustains the supreme power, without meaning for a moment to insinuate that they were the result of his individual agency. Thus Napoleon is represented as conducting at once the most multifarious movements in the most remote parts of Europe, where nothing more was intended than that they were executed, directly or indirectly, by his order. He thus becomes identified with his empire and spoken of as though he pervaded all its parts. Thus the sovereign of Great Britain, by a fiction of speech perfectly understood, is represented as the direct object of every offense and as present in every court of law.

"Conceiving Satan, agreeable to the intimations of the word of God, to be the chief or head of a spiritual dominion, we easily account for the extent of the agency he is affirmed to exert in tempting and seducing the human race; not by supposing him to be personally present wherever such an operation is carrying on, but by referring it to his auspices and considering it as belonging to the history of his empire. As innumerable angels of light fight under the banners of the Redeemer, so, there is every reason to conclude, the devil also is assisted by a numerous host of his angels. On this principle the objection we are considering falls entirely to the ground, and no more ubiquity or omnipresence is attributed to Satan by our system than to Alexander, Cæsar, or Tamerlane, whose power was felt and their authority acknowledged far beyond the limits of their personal presence." \*

II. There are some who would explain away what *is written* of Satan as an allegorical personification of the enigmas that beset all finite minds; but in Scripture he is a fearfully real person, embodying not only doubt and partial knowledge, but hatred of God and man. In the Scripture he is the head and chief "of all the evil principalities and powers in spiritual places." He is "the god of this world, who worketh mightily in the children of disobedience." He may almost be said to be the substance of which evil thoughts are the shadows. In the midnight of his mind are garnered up all doubt and erring knowledge, all cruelty and fraud in the hell that was a heart. The heathenism, not yet exorcised from Christendom,

\* Robert Hall.

pictures him with the horns, the cloven hoofs, and tail of a satyr of the woods. With that vulgar caricature compare this portrait of Satan :

“ His wings like thunder-clouds above some coast  
 Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved ;  
 His brow was like the deep when tempest-tossed.  
 Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved  
 Eternal wrath on his immortal face ;  
 And where he looked a gloom pervaded space.”

There were some of the Gnostics who taught that the soul must pass through all human experiences, and through reptiles, fishes, beasts, and birds in successive transmigrations ; for in no other way could it become so intelligent of all feeling as to be able to withstand all temptation and renounce all sin.\* Their unbalanced minds were seeking for an answer to a startling question which few but themselves have thought of : How can a creature of limited faculties

\* In Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, chap. xxv, I find that Carpocrates and his followers held that Jesus was the son of Joseph, and was like other men, save that his soul was steadfast and pure. They said they themselves were like Jesus ; yet they practiced magic, incantations, had recourse to familiar spirits and dream-sending demons ; saying they were at liberty to do irreligious and impious things, for actions were evil or good simply in virtue of human opinion. They held it to be necessary that, by means of transmigration from body to body, they should experience every kind of life, and do every kind of act (unless one were able by a single incarnation to prevent the need of more), by doing with completeness things which, says Irenæus, “ we dare not either speak or hear of, which we must not conceive of even in our thoughts, in order that, as their writings express it, their souls, having made trial of every kind of life, may at their departure not be wanting in any particular. On that they insist, lest, on account of something being still wanting to their deliverance, they should be compelled once more to become incarnate.”

And in chap. xxxi we find another sect, the Cainites, holding, as Carpocrates held, “ that men cannot be saved until they have gone



in threescore years and ten confront all temptation and conquer all sin? Musing on the difficult question and the strange answer of the Gnostics, these queries offered themselves, suggesting a possible, nay a probable, reason why God permits man to be tempted of Satan. If a soul be exposed to the temptations of an evil being who impersonates all doubt and sin, may not the test be of equal force and effect as if it were tried and tempted by the allurements of every doubt and by the fascination of every sin? Since evil is so concentrated in Satan, may not a soul in its life-time here on this earth, in him, confront all evil? In prevailing over the prince of darkness may it not prevail over all doubt? If it conquer "the god of this world" may it not conquer all sin? If so, then what were otherwise an endless battle might be fought in a life-time, in a day, in an hour, or, possibly, in an instant of time.

III. Many questions arise out of the record of the temptation. Some contend that Jesus did not know that the tempter was Satan, or he would have sent him off; but in the spiritual sphere, where the combat was partly fought, are not thoughts and suggestions judged of by their own character, and not by the character of those persons from whom they come? This seems to be implied in the prologue to the book of Job, where Satan, coming unbidden, talks with God and is permitted to carry out a plan of his own.

through all kinds of experience. An angel, they say, attends them in every one of their sinful, abominable actions, and urges them on to pollution. And, without shrinking from rushing into such action as it is not lawful even to name, they maintain that *this is perfect knowledge.*"

That Satan divined something of the nature of Jesus comes out in "If thou be the Son of God." Jesus does not deny that, and, being such, *how could he be tempted?* As to that, all, perhaps, we shall ever know is all that really we need to know—"He was tempted in all points like unto us," and, "having been himself tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

*It may be* that we are to understand from the temptation of Jesus that there are times—and times to be greatly feared—when we are not to shun or flee temptation, when we are to suffer Satan to parley with us, when we are to weigh his doubts, to pierce through the deceit of his reasonings, to withstand the allurements of his promises, and in fair, open fight to win a victory over "the ruler of the darkness of this world?"

*Be that as it may*, in the battle between the two Persons in the wilderness there was that which has not its like. The sin of Adam came not from the promptings of his upright, innocent nature, and the righteousness of man comes not through the promptings of his fallen nature. Man's ruin came by the cruelty and craft of the evil one. His redemption comes because "God so loved the world that he sent his Son into the world, that the world through him might be saved." The times are far apart, but the facts correspond. The evil one came up from the infernal world into paradise; from the celestial world the Holy One came down into this sinful world. He came to fulfill the promise of One who "should bruise the head of the serpent." He came "to destroy the devil and his works." Through a woman the destroyer prevailed. The Redeemer was to be

born "of a woman;" and in "the fullness of time" the Virgin's Son was led by the Spirit of God to meet the tempter, as of old champions were led by kings to the lists of battle.

From that hour in Eden lines of types blazing through the darkness converged to Him. Prophets foretold of him, now with sadness, now with exulting gladness, now with voices like the All hail! to saints welcomed in paradise, now like the muffled drums mourning a victor dead; and Jesus heard the blending joy and woe

"Musing and much revolving in his breast  
How best his mighty work he might begin  
Of Saviour to mankind; and which way first  
Publish his God-like office, now mature."\*

The world was Satan's field of triumphs; and, though darkly revolving the promise, the types, the prophecies, he came to the great trial with all the experience of the thousands of years he had wrought the ruin of man. The consequences of that hour reached beyond the human race. They reached to all the worlds. And angels watched the duel between the champion of heaven and the champion of hell in the wilderness of a ruined world.

Did not unanswerable questions here arise, the facts would not agree either with the persons, or with the relations of that hour to a kingdom which passes the bounds of the seen and the known, *to a universal kingdom*. Belief in the temptation ought not to be affected by the fact that we do not understand all about it; for its reality can bear the test of a knowledge of the human heart, and of the nature and

\* Milton's *Paradise Regained*, Book i.

constitution of man, that has been growing in all the ages since, and of an insight into things spiritual that long has been quickening and enlarging. And this is convincing proof of the truth of what is revealed of the temptation—*it is the strongest temptation that can now be conceived of as possible at the time.*

It is a dangerous moment when reflection is about to pass into action. Until Satan came in the garden of Gethsemane there was no opportunity for him as promising and favorable as that in the wilderness. The first step shows the way; and knowing that if at first Jesus went wrong he would always go wrong Satan tried to mislead him. In Gethsemane Satan tried to shake the confidence of Jesus in the course he had chosen in the wilderness. In a strong temptation the Saviour began his work. He finished his work in a stronger one.

In each of the three forms of the temptation Satan *tried for the same thing that he tries for in the temptation of every one—Satan tried to make Jesus put his own will in the place of the will of God.* Divining what ought to be the great lines of the Saviour's course, he tempted him to misuse both his superhuman and his human powers. He tempted insidiously. He tempted openly. Satan understood the complicate structure of man, and he tempted the appetites, the sensibilities, and the will.

IV. The appetites are springs that move the ponderous machinery of society. The toiling millions work for bread; and, were it not for hunger, the arts farthest removed from that lowly motive would perish, and the costly complicate fabric of civilization would crumble away. Man, ingenious in spoiling natural

pleasures, makes the gratification of the appetites an end in itself. Wine, the most ethereal of food, beguiles sorrow, lightens care, quickens the torpor of age. Its witchery blends with songs of Auld Lang Syne, with the civic feast, the soldier's welcome home. Youth intoxicates like wine.

"Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,  
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm  
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;  
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;  
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,  
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey."

Temptation with serpent-like subtilty steals into the unsuspecting heart of timid innocence in ways that do not startle. The slow current silently gliding into resistless strength gives no warning of its swiftness as it nears the precipice.

Jesus, hungry, was not tempted with a banquet. Satan tempted him with bread. In *that* there was nothing suspicious. It seemed like a whisper of nature; and had tradition told that Jesus, who made bread for others, when starving in a wilderness made bread for himself—*save for what is written in the gospels*—no one would have thought it a sin.

Hiding within the temptation to the appetites a temptation to the sensibilities, Satan tried to enkindle pride, by saying, "*If thou be the Son of God.*" Pride is the all of sin, if the word be taken for the usurping by selfish self-love of the place of unselfish love of self and of love of God. Into the sin of pride the archangel fell; and in each of the three forms in which he tempted Jesus it was his aim and hope to awaken pride. He would that Jesus should

try to prove himself the Son of God by an act that seemingly was *natural, useful, and right*. The temptation is dangerous that disguises sin as good. Here sin was "disguised in the seeming good of convincing one who doubted what it was one of the ends of the mission of Jesus to prove. It was farther disguised in the form of that self-respect of which *it is written*, "Let no man despise thee." Pride in spiritual gifts kindles quick. Sharp the contrast between the mission and the hunger of Jesus! In the "*If thou be the Son of God*" there was a poisoned sting. And though in the retrospect the temptation that fails seems weak, yet the time, place, circumstances, and motives made this seemingly simple and weak temptation infernally strong.

Satan was sagacious in divining that Jesus would sin if in his office he did any thing for himself. That he reasoned correctly is proved by these words of Jesus, "I came not to do mine own will," and also by the fact that he wrought no miracles through pride. Some of his miracles *may* not transcend the possible powers of man, but they all were wrought in a spirit unlike the selfish spirit of man.

In the hope of serving themselves men readily serve the great. For their own ends the Jews would have served Jesus, had not his unselfishness forbidden them to think that in and through him they could gratify their own selfishness. He told them if another came in his own name "him ye will receive." Speaking of what they wished, and disclosing its true nature, he said, "If I honor myself my honor is nothing." And he thus summed up his life, "Father, I have glorified thee."



Such is the point and precision of the brief questions and answers in the temptation; so incisive and decisive are they, the thoughts so outspeed the swiftness and overpass the compass of the words, that they mark a sphere where thoughts are realities. No words rejected the first temptation. Its refusal went without saying. *That* the words do not tell; and yet, *how much they tell!*—that the soul is more than the body, and if nourished by the truth of God will live though the body die. *All that was said* when Jesus repeated to Satan what of old the lawgiver said to Israel, “Man lives by all that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”—*by all truth in nature, in life, in history, in revelation.*

V. In the mother of the human race, tempted at first through the appetites, pride was awakened by this promise, “Ye shall be as gods *in knowing.*” But, although Satan in the garden of Eden had used the allurements of knowledge with disastrous effect, he could not use it in the wilderness; for, before that temptation was offered, it was foiled, its force broken and destroyed by the words, “Man lives by that which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” After that, well the Archangel knew it was a vain and idle thing to tempt Jesus by the allurements of knowledge.

Yet, here, let us meditate upon knowledge as a temptation. Such indeed it is when in the freshness of delightful wonder youth walks enchanted in the groves of the Muses. Yet the soul can no more be satisfied with knowledge than fire with fuel or the grave with the increasing congregation of the dead.

The everlasting ideas,\* more stable than the earth and older than the heavens, have reality from God, and only through him do they become objects of wisdom. The study of nature cannot satisfy man, who will outlive the natural world. The heart cannot forever be content with any thing that is perishable; and though for a time the soul may delight in the curiously adorned and diversified forms of perishable things, if it know and love only such, it must at last and forever be tortured by the heart's unsatisfied desires. Neither can the study of man satisfy the soul, though, exhaustless in the outworkings of his nature and unsearchable in its depths, man awakens every emotion, from exquisite admiration to profound pity. How lifeless the buried great! How little is truly known of the times and the men that were! And man himself—why does he live and suffer and die? His life has no true end in itself. Its true end is God. Apart from him a man is a withering branch plucked from its parent stem. The knowledge that finds not him can no more hinder or heal man's sin and misery than his life can achieve a lasting victory over the causes which induce death. Amid the revelries of knowl-

\* We mean "the idea of the good as something more than happiness; of the beautiful as more than a generalization of pleasing sensations; of the true as something higher than a deduction from past, present, or future *facts*; of the just and the right, as far above the questions that are the main things in most systems of morals; of law as a spiritual power distinct from the muscular force of the majority, of penalty and retribution as more than mere physical consequences. We mean ideas that are an essential part of the constitution of the human soul, and that are universal ideas in distinction from the public opinion of the moment. They lie at the basis of a common-sense philosophy that is most religious, yet most practical, that is child-like and yet profound."

edge the deliriously dreaming soul, poisoned by the arrow of the temptation in paradise, languishes toward the second death. Yet strong is the temptation to worship Knowledge! There is sorcery in her breath. There is fascination in her eyes. She bewilders and destroys by shadows of the Truth of which Christ is the substance. Despising slaves of the appetites, her devotees live and die slaves of sensuous pleasures of the mind. And Christ's reproof of the angel to whom in heaven knowledge gave no victory over his passions, to whom in hell it brings no deliverance, is fraught with solemn warning: "Man lives by the words which proceed out of the mouth of God."

VI. In the second temptation the change of place is a new element of wonder. Out of this change, in a great degree, have come the unwarrantable or irreverent conjectures that the temptation was a parable, an allegory, a dream, or a myth. The way is opened for those delusions by the not uncommon notion that Jesus was carried away against his will—an error without reason or excuse, for words just such as those in the record are now in daily use; as when a pilgrim tells that his dragoman "took him up" from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and no one supposes that he was hurried to the holy city by magic, unwillingly, and through the air.

By the Spirit Jesus was driven into the wilderness to be tempted; and the power to tempt, divinely conceded to Satan, carried with it, *and it always does*, something of power to shape the circumstances so as to give force to the temptation. It is unpardonable to suppose that Jesus did not act

freely; \* for never is the devil suffered to violate the freedom of the will, which God himself never violates.

That the temptation was a dream or a vision has had some countenance from the fact that the two persons seem to go away from the desert twice, and instantly seem back there, as in changes that take place in dreams. And, to me, it seems that, going even beyond this, the record really does give the impression that they were in and out of the wilderness at the same time. If it does, *possibly* this may admit of such illustration and confirmation that it will, in time, become one of the seals of its truth. But that time has not come; perhaps it never will come; and we should rest content with the truth and fact that the Son of God and "the god of this world" could not have been fettered by space and time.

VII. Genius feels the electric shock of a city. Her wings unfold at the sight of domes and towers. And when from the pinnacle of the temple Jesus contrasted Nazareth with great Jerusalem, Satan looked for a tumult of emotions, a restless ecstasy that would break out in daring presumption. The Jews were looking for marvels from the Messiah. Had they seen Jesus upborne on the clouds they would have taken it for proper evidence of his claim. And when this is remembered the air of extravagance and improbability which is apt to hang around the second

\*The misapprehension above considered is so common that a familiar illustration of the truth may here be given: A merchant, offering a house or a farm at a certain price, says to the man who is to buy it, "Let us quit this counting-room and together take a good look at the property." The buyer, that may be, knows as well as the seller that the offer there will be more tempting, yet thinks it best and right to go, and willingly he is taken to the spot.

temptation so disappears\* that it can be said of this, as of the first temptation, that had something of the kind been told of Jesus in the apocryphal gospels, or been handed down by tradition, it might have been believed were it not for the instruction of the gospels.

Jesus was tempted to presume upon his own strength, and then upon the help of God; to misuse his superhuman and then his human power. In each of those temptations Satan sought to enkindle spiritual pride; and Jerusalem and the temple lent great power to the second temptation. There, with the motive of good to the people, Satan also tried to enforce the temptation by a perversion of holy writ. In this his craft is often underestimated, for the Scripture quoted might have seemed to authorize some such marvel as Satan wished for; and though the devil left out part of the verse, yet satanic suggestions as to the guiding of passages of Scripture often do harm when the misleading is plainer.

It is wrong to attempt to do what is beyond our powers or our opportunities; yet genius is apt to undervalue moderation and self-control, to presume upon its high qualities, to try to soar when it should walk; and is the more open to such things because men look for uncommon things from genius, and when disappointed they question or deny its existence. Yet genius and common sense may go together.

\*In a rabbinical commentary Edersheim finds this: "Our rabbies give this tradition. In the hour when King Messiah cometh he standeth upon the roof of the sanctuary, and he proclaims to Israel, saying, "The time of your redemption draweth nigh. Rejoice in my light which is risen upon you."

It was so in the whole course of the Son of man. He never tried to do more than his duty. He waited till "he was about thirty years of age." He did all things with the prudence and forethought of common sense. Yet in him the human nature was complete. Strauss, imagining that he had put an end to Christianity, was so terrified by the appalling void that he piteously cried out, "*The worship of genius is still left to us, and that is all there is left!*" In seeking to crucify the Son of man afresh little he knew that he was trying to crucify Him in whom there was, in absolute fullness, that genius to which he would have men build anew their broken altars! And, not knowing the human in Jesus, how could he know the divine?

After Satan was defeated in his own person he made use of others. They beset Jesus, entreating him not to wait his Father's time, not to rest content with his Father's way. This temptation confronted him when the Pharisees asked for a sign. It cried from the prison of John. It crossed his path in the multitude who would have made him king. It was in the counseling of his brethren to show himself at the feast "*openly.*" It rebuked him from Peter's lips. It mocked him, saying, "Come down from the cross, that we may see and believe." And when he had risen from the dead it dared to ask, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

To him the military and civic pride of a kingdom was no temptation; but how strong his desire at once to overcome evil, wipe away all tears, undo all wrong! Who can conceive how hard it was to wait for all this? Who can understand the temptation he breathed



away forever when he said, "Not my will, but thine," and suffered his own will to be nailed to the cross?

The unearthly disinterestedness of Jesus awakened hatred and doubt. There was hardly an echo, then, to the voice from heaven, "In him I am well pleased;" and is there more than echo now? Of all who acknowledge that he has all power, *where is one* who at all times is content with his use of that power? The mysterious will of his Father ruled his life on earth; now his own mysterious will rules the life of man. The secrets of that will cannot be known. They bring dismay and doubt into the wide circle of history and into the narrow circle of each life. His thoughts are not as our thoughts, his ways are not as ours; yet the manifestation he now makes is like the manifestation he made on the earth. While his life was passing here his purposes were comprehended by no one, and no one comprehends them now. Temptation reaches him no more; yet, could it enter "the heaven far above all heavens," the temptation instantly to sweep away all evil would reach him there. It is upborne from all the earth in the prayers of faltering lips, in the cries of breaking hearts, while he waits with unaltering, pitying love, as the swift ages—to human thoughts so slow—are hastening on the fullness of his appointed times.

VIII. Satan was no trifler who offered weaker temptations of a similar kind after his stronger ones were defeated. In tempting Jesus through the seemingly innocent cry of nature for bread, the devil failed. In tempting him in the holy city and on the pinnacle of the temple, to give a seemingly right and needful sign of his Messiahship, he also failed. What then

was there left? After the temptation of the appetites and the sensibilities, after he had tried to mislead Jesus in the use of his superhuman and his human powers, after his attempts in each of those ways to enkindle spiritual pride had all come to nothing, what was there left for Satan but to try to overmaster the will of Jesus? *Before* he tried to deceive. There is no concealment of his purpose *now*. That was the craft of "the old serpent." This is the daring of the angel who made war on God.

In what our Lord told his disciples of the temptation he said nothing of previous counselings within himself; and yet in the forty days Jesus may have considered his lines of action and have reached his decisions before there came hunger and the favorable time for the supreme effort of Satan to turn him from the course he had marked out. And from the last assault of the devil some light is thrown upon two lines of action, one of which Jesus chose. Some light is also thrown upon them by the hope of the Jews at that very time of a Messiah who would be "higher than all kings and rule them with a rod of iron." They looked for him as the Liberator of Israel. The heart of the Jewish people was stirred with those passionate longings which shape a nation's future. Not long before they had won their freedom from the Greeks, when the Greeks were as strong in the land as the Romans had become. They believed that the Son of David would be more victorious than the Maccabees, and they felt that his coming was nigh. On the map of the Roman Empire their land was only a spot; but into all its kingdoms Jews had gone forth. Great their number in the Far-East, in

the East, in Syria, in Egypt, and other parts of Africa, in Asia Minor, in Cyprus and other islands of the midland sea. And there was much to encourage their common expectations which could not have escaped the eyes of Jews, then as now keen and sagacious observers of all matters of public concern or of future change. The world, with one government and with one language common enough for intercourse, was an open world. The isolation of the nations was a thing of the past. There were no barriers against waves of force. Every-where the dominion of Rome was hated as well as feared, and the Jews, with their home at the center of the Roman circle, yet intermingled with all races, were fitted to become a new and great military power. One who could have enkindled the warlike fanaticism of all the Jews could have broken the Roman yoke. A few hundred years afterward the children of Ishmael in a religious and military frenzy swiftly overran and possessed a large part of the Roman world.

Jesus had been familiar from his childhood with the prevailing thought of the liberty of Israel. It was out on the free winds of the Galilean hills. It breathed in all hearts around him. Save Judas, the twelve were men of Galilee. One was of those patriotic Zealots who brought on the war with the Romans, and some of whom our Lord did not condemn when "Pilate mingled their blood with their sacrifices." But with political action Jesus would have nothing to do. He put away every thing of the kind.

Yet, apparently, there were strong reasons for a different course; and Satan, when empowered to set before Jesus all the glory of that course, may have

thought this must accomplish his evil purpose, so well was his last temptation suited by its breadth to a world-embracing mind; for a temptation, weak to a weak man, may be a strong temptation to a strong man. Cæsar or Napoleon might have been overcome by what would have been no temptation to men of less kingly mold. It was the greatest angel who yielded to the aspiration to be greater.

As in the second, so in the last temptation, the Son of man and "the god of this world" were free from the trammeling of space and time. To some, not understanding this, the showing of all the kingdoms from the top of a mountain reads like a tale of magic, and with some it confirms their notion of a dream. But the every-day bounds of the arch fiend's power must have been far overpassed when power was given him to tempt the Son of God. And yet, *with a temptation essentially the same as the last temptation in the wilderness, Satan tempts every one.* The devil shows to each and every person just that part of the world's glory which suits his individual capacities and desires; and he offers it on the same terms on which the whole was offered to Jesus. To each person he holds out what that person covets most; though he seldom makes the condition of the grant as plain as he made it in the last temptation in the wilderness, having become convinced that he could not deceive Jesus.

Some suppose that Jesus was shown as much of the little cantons of Palestine as the naked eye could see from some Pisgah-like crag; but *all the kingdoms of the world* were shown; and the difficult mountain from whose perilous summit the ample

glendor unrolled may have been anywhere under the whole heavens. All was shown in an instant of time; but there may be room in an instant of time for ages of feeling. "All kingdoms and the glory of them all" the prince of this world offered. And the offer was a real one. For these words in their truth are as near as any to words of holy writ—"the juggling fiend doth keep his word of promise to the ear, and breaks it to the hope." The Son of God did not deny the power of "the god of this world." He did not question his power or his promise when he answered and said, "*It is written*, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

There can be no temptation of the mind. The mind is a mirror which reflects the image of what is held up before it. Moral character attaches to thoughts through the heart. And through God's help the heart can drive evil thoughts and desires out of itself and out of the mind, when the devil puts them in. The devil sought through the passions to reach the heart of Jesus, and through the heart to determine the will, which is the man. Assailing on every side, he tempted Jesus to abuse his divine and his human powers. He disguised evil as good, and when he used sin openly he used it to the utmost. Then through every appetite, every desire, every passion, he tried to storm the will. All the time, place, and circumstances were favorable to the temptation and were made more so. The motives that Satan used were the strongest he could have used; and that after all the unknown years of his fearful degradation he so mastered the principles of action that should guide the Christ, so understood

the nature of man, is as strange and incredible as any thing in the wilderness!

Right and wrong are the souls of actions. The form of acts may vary infinitely and their soul be the same. Therefore a course of action that knows no end may be determined in one single act. A right or wrong choice may forever so determine the will that its power of choice between those two essential eternal opposites, right and wrong, may be lost forever. Adam chose the wrong, and his decision was irreversible by any power of his own. In and of himself there remained for him actions only varied in form but the same in their unchanging spirit forever. That was the law in the desert. All else was in contrast with Eden—a wilderness for a garden, wild beasts for tame creatures; but the tempter and the law were the same.



## CHAPTER V.

## TIME AND PLACE OF THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY—PLAN OF SAINT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL AS TO THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

THE signs and glories of the baptism, *now* so public, were secret *then*. This is stamped on the words "*I, John, saw and bear witness.*" A chosen few he told that Jesus was "the Lamb of God." But the committee of the Sanhedrim dared not ask who the Messiah was, lest the people should know the prophet did not trust them. And the caution of the herald is a sign of the dangers which haunted the King from Bethlehem to the cross.

The dazzling of the glory of Christ Jesus blinds us to the prudent forethought in his sojourn in the land of Judea, recorded only by Saint John. In Nazareth, a frontier village, there were no means of learning whether Judea was a fitting place for the chief scene of his labors and teachings. Time was gained for this while John was going on with his proclamation; and while the public eye was fixed on the Baptist, Christ Jesus tested Judea as he tested Nazareth before he made Capernaum his home.

His peril and his prudence are also seen when John was cast into prison. Warned of some evil design of the Pharisees in Judea, he fled from thence through Samaria into Galilee. In Judea, through a concession wrung or bought from the Roman governor, the San-

hedrim might have put Jesus to death earlier than it did, but it could not *then* stretch out its arm and seize him in the great northern province. There it could send spies, stir up the Pharisees, fire the suspicion of Herod, tamper with the people; yet for Jesus, in manhood, as in childhood, Galilee was safer than Judea.

II. As Saint John tells that Christ Jesus called disciples, wrought miracles, and that many came to him before the imprisonment of the Baptist, the charge has been made that Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke are at variance with Saint John as to the time of the beginning of the ministry; but those earlier evangelists do not say that Jesus did nothing official before the end of the office-work of his herald, though they leave no doubt that whatever he then did was preparatory to that full ministry from which they select their facts. And Saint John, having their gospels before him, carefully states that what is written in his earlier chapters was before "John was cast into prison."

It would be a sign of their having lived after the times of which they wrote, had the evangelists dealt with dates just as their critics say that trustworthy writers would have done; for the chroniclers of to-day do not take such pains with dates as the historians of yesterday, because they write of things that happened before the eyes of those around them. Besides this, the gospel-writers have ways of their own. Thus Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke, by their portraiture of the forerunner, pre-intimate that when his office ends the King will come, and the King does come when his herald is silent.

In that there is more than a date, for the relation between the imprisonment of John and the full opening of the ministry of our Lord reveals that the hour of a seeming triumph of the kingdom of darkness is an hour of advance in the kingdom of light.

The star set, the sun rose; and Saint Matthew remembered that in a vision of old "the land of Zebulon, and the land of Nephthaliin, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness saw a great light."

III. So quick were the sharp-witted lawyers and scribes of Jerusalem to draw logical inferences that, in the Sermon on the Mount, had it been preached in the court of the temple, they would have seen not only a claim to the Messiahship, but that claim of true divinity for which the Jews took up stones to stone the Christ. In Jerusalem there could be no gradual unfolding of his doctrines; and yet in that way only could his doctrines gain a hearing.

Within the walls of the holy city were gathered the genius and the ambition of the Jewish race. The temple was there, and the hearts of its citizens were heated and hardened by spiritual pride. The Jews of Galilee were more teachable than the Jews of Jerusalem. They had less culture, but less conceit and less bigotry. They were of the same blood, of the same faith, but between them an alien people was a dissevering sea. Galilee was like an island severed in some convulsion from its parent land. Yet Galilee was more international than the capital. Jerusalem had no easy intercourse with the world. No Danube flowed past its wall. Its approaches to and from the Mediterranean Sea were made difficult by the strange

ravines and rough hills between it and the poor harbors of Joppa and Cesarea. The narrowing effect of this isolation was somewhat counteracted by the concourse of foreign Jews, who, fresh from contact with the outside world, crowded the narrow streets of Jerusalem at the sacred festivals. Her citizens heard many strange languages; they themselves talked as much in Greek as in Hebrew; yet in the northern province foreign influences had still freer course. Syrians, Phenicians, Arabs, and Greeks were there; and to keep the peace among the commingled races the Roman was there. Galilee, with the adjacent ranges and valleys of peopled Lebanon, was a world of divers manners, customs, laws, and religions. Yet the Jew of Galilee could not be seduced by their fascinations. Despising the stately temple of the idol-carving Greeks, he worshiped in his low-roofed synagogue. He lived and died after the perfect manner of his fathers. He waited and watched for the Messiah, like the Jew in Judea, but when the Messiah came he heard him with more calmness and justice. And the Galilean disciples of Jesus, citizens of the world, were more readily transformed into apostles to the nations.

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him

great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." What a picture is this of unrecorded goodness, of unwritten wisdom! Yet question not God! Who has ever profited as he should by what he was permitted to know of his Son?

IV. Saint Matthew, who was selected by his brethren to write out their official witness to the words and works of their Lord in Galilee, like Michael Angelo, was a man of many gifts; and like him he was more of an architect than a painter. He built a temple enriched with much that makes a shrine complete, but distinctively Saint Matthew was a sculptor. On broad canvas painting displays many figures. Sculpture molds one. Painting has color. Sculpture has form. Painting weaves shadows. Sculpture chisels the rock. Painting presents the varied scenes of man's life. Its eternal moments are the sculptor's.

It often happens that when a writer has to choose between facts that find favor in his eyes he cannot give up this one for its novelty, that one for its beauty, another for its truth. His riches so embarrass and bewilder him that he piles up a shapeless mound of costly materials. That Saint Matthew was free from such weakness is proved by *those thirteen verses which cover all the time and space between the temptation and the sermon*. He there alludes to a throng of miracles and to circuits of preaching, but he does not there preserve one of our Lord's sayings, does not there describe one of those many miracles; and yet with his own eyes the evangelist beheld some of them, and of some he afterward told. Hitherto there has been no solution of the singular problem

of those thirteen verses. Color-blind critics take them as evidence of the fragmentary character of the earliest gospel; yet Saint Matthew must have had a good reason for saying nothing distinctive of any of the numerous and great events in the busy time of that section; and when the reason for the manner and form of *those thirteen verses* is discovered in their relation to the Sermon on the Mount they become unmistakable and luminous evidence of the constructive wisdom of the inspired evangelist.

Saint Matthew wished and intended to make Christ Jesus known at once as the Lord of a universal, spiritual, eternal kingdom, by the Incarnation, by the wonders and signs at the baptism, by the defeat of Satan in the wilderness, and by the Sermon on the Mount. They were above the common course of things in the sacred life. They have greater power than its miracles to convince and subdue. And, meaning by these pre-eminent things to give unity to the opening of his gospel, Saint Matthew did not interpose any lesser events between the great victory and the great sermon. He gave with unbroken effect the Gospel of Christ Jesus, acknowledged as the beloved Son, overcoming Satan and reaching for a time his fullest self-revelation in the Sermon on the Mount. This is the reason why, *in those thirteen verses*, he told nothing he could leave untold—why he merely named the miracles of months, generalizing every thing, passing over all that would have too much diverted the mind from the sermon. His soul is bent on our hearing Christ. With him, as with Saint John, Christ is the Word.

One fact alone is enough to prove that such was



his design in the construction *of those thirteen verses*. He knew and felt that if he, a citizen of Capernaum, recited Saint Peter's call and gave no hint of the great miracle, some would say there was no such miracle. And the evangelist, the lightest touch of whose flying steel was guided by the Holy Spirit, says that in the partnership Jesus found James and John "mending their nets." There was some strong reason for noticing so little a thing in such a paragraph; and, though Saint Luke had not written then, yet the allusion to the miracle was plain from the oral gospel.

Something had to be told of Jesus, of his calling disciples, and of his mighty works to prepare for the Sermon on the Mount; and that is so told as not to turn thought away from Christ himself to his actions. Not winding on its way, the short road runs straight to the mountain.

The view taken can readily be tested by inserting into that short paragraph the bad behavior of the townsmen of Jesus on his first visit to Nazareth, as recorded by Saint Luke, or the healing of the nobleman's son, or any of the numerous miracles before the sermon. Any thing of the kind breaks in upon the unity which, at a great cost, the evangelist secured. And his quotation from Isaiah is in felicitous harmony with his design, in that its undivided interest centers in Christ.

The construction of this part of Saint Matthew's gospel was the premeditated achievement of highest historic genius; but this does not exclude the nobler fact that the Holy Spirit wrought with the human nature and the human effort he did not supersede;

that he guided the mind, determined the judgment, and strengthened the will of his evangelist. Saint Matthew wrought out his gospel, God working with him "to will and to do."

With the modern feeling, that the glory of our Lord is more visible in his truth than in his miracles, with the judgment which, reversing the rule as to men, gives higher place to his words than to his acts (save his sacrificial death), Saint Matthew was in sympathy. He thought and felt that before all else *Jesus must be heard*. But who shall measure the self-control which resisted the telling at once of those miracles of mercy, those words of grace? Strong the temptation! But his genius faltered not, relented not! He was strong in the strength of God.

The evidence of these things is not all in. Much of it has to be deferred to the two chapters that come after the sermon; but enough is in to warrant the saying that the hold which the truth in Christ has upon the world is owing, in some measure, to the way in which the inspired evangelist planned the earlier part of his holy gospel. This has done much to secure a hearing for Christianity; for whoever opens the New Testament will read as far as the sermon; if he reads so far, the sermon will be read through; and when *that* is read the Gospel of Christ lays a hold upon the heart which cannot be shaken off.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT—THE BEATITUDES.

DID Saint Matthew weave together as one discourse words spoken at divers times and places, and thus make up the sermon? Scholastics too often say that he did;\* and thus, whether consciously or not, they charge the holy evangelist with sacrilegious presumption and with falsehood. For Saint Matthew, as carefully as though he foresaw the charge, thus fixes the place and the circumstances—"Seeing the multitudes, Jesus went up into a mountain, and when he was set his disciples came unto him, and he taught them, saying" *the words he records; and after that "Jesus had ended these sayings (τους λόγους) the people were astonished at his doctrine."*

The disproof of the scholastic questioning and de-

\* Ellicott does say, "This opinion, though adopted by so good an interpreter as Calvin, is now commonly felt to be improbable;" yet the comment that goes in the bishop's name speaks of "possibly a few additions." The German, Neander, interviewing some ancient scribe, thus journalizes: "The original document of Matthew passed through the hands of the Greek editor (?), who inserted other words spoken by Christ on other occasions." The Englishman, Farrar, "sees *no objection whatever* to the supposition that Matthew combined and summarized many sermons." The Frenchman, Pressensé, "will not deny the sufficient connection, but it is because sayings of Jesus were collected according to their affinity." Godet, the Swiss, feels that such talk tends to make it doubted if there were any sermon—"Assuredly there was a sermon, but Matthew, like a good gardener who puts together magnificent bouquets, has added many words."

nial of the assertions of the holy evangelist are much needed because of the insidious spirit of unreason and unbelief now tampering with the Bible. And the accuracy and truthfulness of Saint Matthew can *in this case be proved by proving the organic unity of the discourse*. That can be done if we may study its construction as we study the construction of an oration of Cicero's. And *therefore* I shall do that while studying in holier ways the sermon, of all sermons the greatest and apart from all.

Oratory is so marred with insincerity, passion, and vanity, it is so wrought out with labor and pains, with the study of models and the rules of art, that the thought of the Sermon on the Mount as an oration may give pain to some devout souls whom I would not pain; yet some ideas are needed that go with the word; and it can be freed from unworthy associations. For speech is an outshining of the soul; and, next to prayer, oratory is the brightest ray of speech. Good oratory stoops not to artifice. It gives rules to rhetoric. In roots, stems, leaves, and flowers the system of the botanist is hidden; in the *Iliad* are the laws of epic poetry; in language the rules of grammar; and in oratory there is the system of the rhetorician. He marks the stages of the orator's well-ordered progress. He appreciates what he has no power to create. True eloquence "cannot be brought from far. Labor and learning may toil for it, but they will toil in vain. Words and phrases may be marshaled in every way, but they cannot compass it. It comes, if it comes at all, like the outbursting of a fountain from the earth with spontaneous, original, native force."

Seldom, if ever, to the orator, comes the hour to which his life has been so preconfigured as to call forth heart and mind and will till the oration becomes an image of himself. Even on the mount such was not the hour. The multitudes "from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan" were the forerunners and representatives of an ever-abiding, ever-gathering congregation. It was one of the greatest hours in the history of the human race. Righteousness was then preached as never before. And yet the sermon is not the outshining of all the glory of our Lord. Its truths are beams of the sun.

All things have relation to what is passing away and to that into which they are passing. Satan tempted with motives drawn from within the new cycle of time; the Son of Abraham, the Son of David withstood him with truths from the old cycle. Seen from the temple, the victory in the wilderness was a Hebrew victory. Christ Jesus fought with weapons from the armory of Zion.

The spheres of darkness sink into blacker night, those of light open into brighter day. Whoever possesses one of the spiritual spheres passes onward and upward. *Therefore* if all the incomplete glory of the Hebrew religion was ever centered in any one he must transcend its circle of light. The prophets foretold that such a one would come and take that religion into a higher and wider sphere. All the Hebrew religion centered in the Christ. In him all its promise was fulfilled, and throughout all his manifestation on earth he was clothing it with nobler form. Thus the victory in

the wilderness and the Sermon on the Mount were correlative; and Saint Matthew put them side by side because of their similar greatness. By his brief and general treatment of the works of our Lord before it, he would make us feel as he himself felt, that, great as were those works, the sermon was greater. He subordinates the time-unity of the life of Christ to its ideal unity. The inspired evangelist so constructs this part of his gospel as to give the unbroken effect of the sublime procession of the incarnation, the baptism, the temptation, and the word on the mount; joining as closely as he could the vindication of the old religion in the wilderness to the unveiling of the religion veiled within it. Still sounding is the cry of the herald proclaiming the coming of a King while the King wins his first victory. Hushed is the herald's cry! And then, from a mountain throne, the King reads the charter of a kingdom that exists only in his will. As the Son of man, Jesus prevailed over Satan; as the Son of God, he began on the mount to build the new Jerusalem within whose golden gates the Law enters only in its glorified spirit as Love.

On the mount the heart of the Saviour flows forth in descriptive blessings, which are poetry, and yet are as clear in outline, as comprehensive and brief, as mathematical axioms. THE BLESSINGS MARK THE STAGES OF THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGE. They fall upon the Christian graces in their rightful order of growth and development.

The opening of a discourse should touch the heart and fix the mind. It is not a good place for any full exposition of so complicate a subject as the order and



relation of the Christian graces ; and here the successive stages of their growth are but intimated through their time-order in the Speaker's heart and mind. Had more been done, the inference would have been that all Christian lives should be run in one mold ; and from efforts to shape them all according to a stereotyped process harm would come ; for wide the diversities of character, capacity, and circumstances, varied the ways of the Holy Spirit ; and in this may be the reason why the natural order of growth, the rightful unfolding of the Christian graces, is not taught in the New Testament, excepting as it is inwrought into the Beatitudes.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit" is sculptured over the gate-way of the kingdom of heaven. The passing through that gate-way is the first stage of Christian pilgrimage.\* On its next stage falls the blessing on those who mourn ; for, though the pilgrimage usually begins with an ecstacy of joy and hope, old habits soon re-assert their power. The more earnest the pilgrims, the harder they struggle with the unlooked-for, unwelcome persistence of the evil in their nature, the sharper is their conviction of indwelling sin, and the more continuous and bitter their grief. But if they feel no complacency in their sorrow ; if they do

\*It is as far beyond my powers as it is beyond my purpose to say all that might be said of the divine sermon ; but there is need of clearing up and proving what is said above of "Blessed are the poor in spirit." This blessing falls on *those who are in the kingdom*. It is *theirs* ; but "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God ;" and it can be theirs only who have passed "from death unto life." The new birth interprets the words, "The poor in spirit." For all sin is pride—that is, it is the giving to self the place of God ; and when he is in his rightful place then the soul is in the kingdom of

not make a luxury of their grief; if, confessing they are "miserable sinners," they renounce their sins, their penitence is promise and assurance of better things, and "Blessed are they that mourn."

Many of those verses of Scripture which extol the blessedness of Christians refer to the later stages of their pilgrimage; and though its earliest stage has something of the gladness of spring-time, yet the chill of winter lingers in the air; its biting winds, its sleet and snow come back; and if the tender plant be not well cared for scanty will be the harvest of the sacred year, or, rather, there will be no harvest; there will ever be the backwardness and coldness of the early days of a northern spring.

Still there is disease in the blood, and though the divine medicine checks the sin-fever, yet if the patient does not take care of himself, and if others will not take care of him, he will never be well. His uncomfortable, inconsistent, sickly life will do little good and much harm. The children of this world ever look to see what good a Christian gets from religion. They form their judgment from the majority of Christians—that is, from those who

heaven. The blessings are expressed in terms from the Old Testament; as in the wilderness, our Lord here makes its words his own; and in many ways and forms of speech in the Old Testament "the poor in spirit" are opposed to the proud in spirit, as children of God to the wicked. Had the sermon begun with "Ye must be born again," it would have been the dark saying it was to Nicodemus. Beginning as it does, it goes on with blessings which portray the children of heaven, and it then lays down laws for their conduct.

But, if the kingdom be theirs, can they have more? What room is left for blessings? Room is left, as in the germ for buds and flowers, in the seed for the tree, bearing fruit. The heavenly life, on whose first stage the first blessing rests, unfolds in other blessed stages.

never get beyond the early, unattractive stage of their pilgrimage, and, seeing those pilgrims fretted and worn like themselves, they distrust the professional, conventional assurances of their blessedness, which their own observation plainly contradicts.

For the evil effects of our failing to be good no efforts to save others can make up. *To do good we must be good.* The apostles thought more of training converts than of enlisting raw recruits. Letters, warm from their hearts, show they were bent on making their children men! Their way of converting the world was to make Christians into saints.

The characteristic of the third stage of pilgrimage is meekness;\* and in good and honest hearts, amid aspirations and efforts still renewed, though often chilled and defeated, this grace begins. Meekness is armor against man and fate. The pilgrim who is clothed with meekness envies not the good fortune of others. He does not clamor for his rights. He is grateful for what God grants and for what he denies. What in mercy he withholds he counts no loss, what he gives in love as undeserved gain. Meekness makes him content. Contentment is the true measure of wealth; and, so, the meek "inherit the earth," though the fullness of the blessing promised comes only in the "new heavens and the new earth."

The pilgrim, who in the courage of meekness wastes no time, no strength in the misery of envy, none in the worry of anxious efforts, none in fretting, complaining, or quarreling with the world, reaches

\* Verses fourth and fifth are transposed in some good manuscripts; but the weight of authority is with the received reading; and the internal evidence also is decisive against the alteration.

the high table-land where he hungers and thirsts after righteousness.\*

Well-being and well-doing are both included in righteousness. And though at times the word points to the gladsome honor of religious observances, yet the Pharisee, who sincerely thought that he was righteous because he prayed, fasted, and paid tithes, was contemptuous toward the publican and presumptuous toward God; and those who seek after righteousness in outward or ceremonial well-doing are in danger of the like self-complacency.

In the fourth stage of his journey the pilgrim is more tempted to shut himself out of the world than perhaps in any other; and in this the progress of the soul may resemble that of the Church, for some of the early and mediæval Christians tried to shut out the world by taking up their dwelling in deserts and caves, in monasteries and convents. That experiment of a religiously recluse life, made by many of different nations and of both sexes, teaches that piety and life degenerate when as in Mount Athos or Mount Sinai Christians shut themselves out of that world from which their Saviour would not pray to have his children taken. It is hard to adjust and harmonize the claims and rights of "the seen and the unseen;" and an overtendency to other-worldliness may be as real a temptation as worldliness itself.

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to

\* The previous stages of his journey are not without righteousness. Yet such is the imperfection of language that words often have to be used with an approximation to their full meaning; and though righteousness be not a thing of degrees, yet Saint Paul at one time speaks of righteousness as "the whole armor," and at another time as only of the "breastplate."

every one that believeth." And *righteousness*, in the deepest, truest sense, is no more of man's creating than his food. Our heavenly Father gives righteousness through the gift of his Son, "who was made sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him;" and the harmony of Scripture is awe-inspiring when, having heard our Saviour blessing those who hunger and thirst after righteousness and saying, "They shall be filled," we hear these words: "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven. I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The fourth blessing mainly rests on duty toward God. It is followed by a blessing on those who do their duty toward man; and this blessing, though of lower rank than the fourth, comes after it, because the doing of our duty to man is so consequent and dependent upon our doing our duty to God. Mercy is a favorite name in Holy Scripture for the unmerited divine forgiveness of sin: "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace and obtain mercy." It has also a wider meaning: "O Lord, thy tender mercies are over all the works of thy hands." And such is the compass of the word that when our Saviour said, "Blessed are the merciful," if we think that he meant those only who are kind to the sick, the old, or the poor, we come far short of the breadth of his thought. In the divine view of human life all social distinctions disappear in the common sin and misery. When the

Son of man said "he came to save the lost" he told what he thought of the human lot, for by "the lost" *all* are meant. And the state of all is so pitiable, at the best, that whosoever withholds from another due affection, trust, or honor, whoever withholds gratitude, or appreciation, or sympathy, withholds *mercy*.

To be merciful is, indeed, a great thing; and great the promise that goes with it! For the Saviour in saying that "the merciful shall obtain mercy" gives them an assurance of help in fiery trials and temptations, which is as truly a mercy as a cup of water to one dying of thirst.

As the pilgrim goes farther on his way more and more he leaves the sins of the flesh behind, and more and more he encounters the danger of pharisaical pride. More than any other, *this sin* benumbs the conscience and hardens the heart. But the wisdom which comes to the merciful through their mercy to others is a safeguard against its insidious temptations. They come to know human nature better than the men of the world, who know its bad side so well. For the merciful man knows that ruined souls are haunted by the unwearying pity of the Spirit of God; and when through the doors of the guilty heart, in the frankness of despair flung wide open, he bears the Saviour's message to the outcast from whom all others stand aloof, there rises before him a sin-convicting, self-revealing vision of the wretch he might himself have been. Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord; whosoever convinceth a man of any sin shall have his own sense of the evil of that sin quickened; whosoever strengthens a man's faith shall have his own faith



strengthened; whosoever enlighteneth a man's conscience shall have his own conscience enlightened; whosoever ministers unto the spiritual wants of any one shall be ministered unto spiritually—"shall obtain mercy and find grace in time of need."

All the earlier stages of the pilgrimage prepare for the sixth stage, and this especially is true of the two before it; for the righteous become the merciful; the merciful, in purifying the souls of others, purify their own souls, and thus they tend to become "the pure in heart who see God."

The idea of a ruler and judge is so much a part of the idea of God that man, who loves to be his own master, and dreads being called to account, puts God out of his thoughts as much as he can. And there are some who are so degraded that every personal element has gone from their idea of the uncreated Creator of all that exists in birth and change. To them the living God is a dead force, no more to be loved and worshiped than the force of gravitation. And there are those who say the Scripture is superfluous; for even according to Saint Paul "the invisible things of God may be understood by the things that are made;" but after saying that he goes on to say that natural religion has failed the Gentiles. *And natural religion utterly fails where revelation is needed most.* Of grace, conscience, "which doth make cowards of us all," knows nothing. The tornado knows no mercy.

Unbelievers delude themselves when thinking their unbelief comes from their *knowing* more than those who believe. The *heart* is the source of all corrupting of the truth and of all flying from it. For the Scripture plainly teaches that *the heart* illumines or

darkens, quickens or deadens *the mind*; as when *it is written*, "I applied my heart to know and to seek and to search out the reason of things;" and, "The fool hath said\*in his heart, . . . no God!" The sixth beatitude suggests that man thinks so strangely of God and puts him so much out of his life *because his heart is not pure*. That is *pure* which is simple, uncompounded, unmixed, as water free from impurities, or gold unalloyed. *Kathapós* (*pure*) denotes a purity amounting to transparency, which leaves the spiritual sight unhindered by any thing confused, muddy, or opaque. On this beatitude some light is thrown by these words of Saint James, "Purify your hearts, ye double-minded;" for the heart is pure when all its desires are united in the loving service of God. With true psychologic and spiritual insight prayed one of old as we all should pray, "O Lord, unite my heart."

The paraliel between seeing a man and seeing God is closer than it seems at first; for the soul or spirit *is the man*. The being and qualities of his spirit are known by means of the body—beaming from his eyes, heard on his lips, or felt in more subtle ways—and that is knowing a man, though no man hath ever seen the spirit, *the real man*.\* In a somewhat like manner God is seen in nature; for, though nature be no part or particle of God, who is spirit, yet through him nature as really exists as the body through the soul. God is also seen in the course of human affairs, between which and him there is a somewhat similar relation to that between him and the universe. And

\* The dependence of the body on the soul is well marked in common speech. When the spirit leaves the body it is not called a body, but a corpse.

as such is the resemblance between our seeing a man and our seeing God, the Scriptures are not inconsistent in saying, "No man hath seen him at any time," and, "The pure in heart see God." But it is to be remembered, it is never to be forgotten, that the Father is seen only in and through his only begotten Son, the Eternal Word, "by whom all things were made," and "in whom all things consist."

Between the sixth and the last stage of the pilgrimage there is the difference between the seeing and *the knowing God*, for that is the meaning of the Hebraism, being "called a child of God." The distinction may roughly be illustrated from our common speech, which so often anticipates the slow discoveries of metaphysics; for one may say, "I have seen the man," meaning that he knows him a little, or, "I saw the man often and long without knowing him; now I know him well." And the difference between *seeing and knowing*, though the latter be the more inward and intimate, seems to be only such a difference between a lower and a higher degree of the knowledge of God as may be seen in these Scriptures: "The Lord looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke." "The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm." "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man." "In his hand is the soul of every living thing." "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." "O Lord, I am continually with thee." "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."

The Bible is its own dictionary, and to find out the heights and depths of the meaning of its words the

holy book must be searched from cover to cover. In human speech peace usually is a cessation of strife. It is more than that in the dialect of heaven. "Blessed are the peace-makers," in connection with other Holy Scriptures, reveals the nature, effect, and source of that peace of which the Saviour said, "My peace I leave with you." The peace which our Saviour gives is not such peace as that enforced by parents or the police, by fear of the law, or by treaties between nations. It is "peace that passeth all understanding," the peace of that union with God out of whose ruin have grown quarrels in families, feuds in neighborhoods, and all strife, from the murdering of the first brother to the murdering of brothers at Fredericksburg.

"God worketh hitherto." His peace is consistent with highest action; and when his peace has subdued the disquieted, divided heart, when it is so ruled and guided by supreme love to God that the passions live well together, the quiet is not apathy or indolence. "A meek and quiet spirit" and earnest and effective effort naturally go together.

In the want of the orderly growth of the Christian life one reason is found why so many fall so far short of the fullness of the blessing of peace. Not only does the convert often waste time and strength in speculating about doctrines rather than in searching out and obeying plain and humble precepts of instant use and duty, but he often tries the higher paths of his pilgrimage before he has patiently trod the lower. He aims at righteousness with no clear or deep convictions of sin; he is zealous in pharisaical ways; unschooled in meekness, to-day he is rashly in the front, and to-morrow, crippled, is in the rear. The unquiet of his heart

is one of his springs of action, and, lacking in purity as well as in humility, he fights with earthly emotion and passion. But if he grows in grace he is less obtrusive, less combative; he is more wise, more consistent, more really in earnest, and much more useful.

Every Christian is a peace-maker; but not until seeing has so passed into knowing that he knows that he is a child of God does the pilgrim reach the highest stage of his journey, which is usually the last. Peace is the characteristic of that stage, as purity, mercy, meekness, righteousness were of its earlier stages; yet in that stage all those graces are present. And then in the peaceful heart of the pilgrim the Divine abides. Of such Christ Jesus said, "If any one love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him."

The blessing falling on Christians as peace-makers rounds out the shield and orb of grace. With this blessing Christ finishes his portrait of a Christian. In this portrait there is nothing mystical or transcendental. Its elements are real and its traits are old, yet their perfect combination and completeness is new. It is a new picture hung in the archway of a new age. It is human and comprehensible, and yet in its higher traits it is a portrait of the Saviour himself. It is a prophetic portrait. It is "the evidence of things not seen," a vision of the ideal beauty of the Church of Christ that will be realized only when the heavens and earth shall have passed away. Yet this portrait is a lesson for the heart. It is set before each individual as if he were God's one child, that, looking upon it, he may be changed into its likeness. Those who have never known a Christian should look on

this portrait, for this is the portrait of a Christian drawn by the hand of Christ!

As the love of Jesus overflows in blessings on his followers, the ill-treatment they will meet with rising up before him—as naturally it would—he blesses those persecuted for righteousness' sake, and he repeats, with completed fullness of meaning, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." His language changes, and so naturally! *Before* his words were general—Blessed are the righteous, the merciful, the pure; *now* they are personal—"Blessed are *ye*." In saying, "When *ye suffer for my sake*, rejoice and be exceeding glad," he strikes the note of the antithesis of the spiritual to the natural heard in all his Scriptures.\* And when he goes on to say, "for so persecuted they the prophets," he reveals that the prophets of old suffered for his sake.†

That blessing is promised to what seems hard and strange; but the fires of martyrdom illuminated the dark saying when, like Stephen, suffering men and women looked up into the opening heavens and rejoiced in Christ.

The murder of prophets naturally suggests the guilt of the Jews; and, with them contrasting those who were to take their place, Christ Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." As salt preserves from putrefying, we may learn from this figure why God, in his omnipotent patience, suffers the

\* As in Heb. xi. 35-40; xii, 1, 3.

† Certainly it was the teaching of the apostles that Christ was as really present with his people in the old time as in the new. See 1 Cor. x, 5. And in these days it refreshes and gladdens the heart to know how fully the fathers understood and believed this.



world to stand. For the sprinkling of salt, without which no sacrifice was acceptable, typified the sprinkling on the soul of the blood of Christ, who, by his Spirit, dwells in Christians; and there is a like truth in the words, "Ye are the light of the world," for through Christians Christ, the true Light, shines into the world.\*

The speaker passes on—and again so naturally—to warn those who were to be in the place of the guilty Jews: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." In those words I find an intimation that our Lord saw no hope in one direction, in another remissness and error, and yet that his Church would fulfill its office. But, however that may be, Christ "described future effects of his truth in a way no man could comprehend at the time, and which centuries of history have been contributing to illustrate." How strange the saying, then, to traders and farmers of Galilee, "Ye are the light of the world," and yet how true the prophetic word! Outside of Christendom little there is of light! And within Christendom even the torches of science, whether the torch-bearers know it or not, were kindled by fire our Lord brought down from heaven.

In other ways history attests to the sermon. The blessings at its beginning and its teachings and warn-

\* See Abraham's conference with the Lord as to the destruction of Sodom.

ings throughout so contradict the expectations and hopes of the Jews that it must have been preached in the last years of the dwelling of the Jews as a people in Palestine. Senators then were going forth from Rome to rule over kingdoms, provinces, and islands; and the Jews thought that in the Messiah's time Mount Zion would be like the Palatine Hill, and from Jerusalem senators of Israel would go forth to rule over the nations. Simple, humble folks listened, but none the less were they dreamers of patriotic dreams, and they felt the wide difference between their ideas and those of the Prophet when he proclaimed that the meek would "*inherit the earth*"—a familiar phrase for the Jewish possession of the conquered world in the Messiah's day. They felt that his thoughts were not as their thoughts, for to them the power latent in meekness was as unknown as the power of electricity. Hungering and thirsting after riches, how could they receive his blessing those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness? And those patriots and zealots, craving revenge on the accursed Romans, were troubled when they heard the blessing to the merciful and that peace-makers were "the children of God." The Prophet destroyed their hopes. "They were astonished." And well may all the world be astonished at the resistless power and thoroughness with which he uprooted the false hopes and dispelled the delusions of a nation.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—(CONTINUED.)

"YE are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." To some critics this coming in of two figures, one after the other, and then of a third, seems to be evidence of their crotchet that the sermon was a made-up thing. But in earnest eloquence figure on figure is natural and common. They also say that the third figure does not suit the place, for in Galilee towns are not set on hill-tops, as they are in Judea. As to the northern province, that is an overstatement; but were it not so, still, the figure might be used anywhere. It is almost a proverbial saying; and, as often noted, Safed, so perched on an isolated peak three thousand feet high\* as to be seen from all the country around the lake, was in plain sight from the mount (wherever that may have been); and our Lord, ever quick to see and use natural objects, may have pointed with his hand to that "city set on a hill."

The striking figure—so natural in view of these facts—does not break up the train of thought. That begins before it, goes on with it, and thus goes on after it: "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light

\* Safed is some twenty-six hundred feet above the sea-level, and the lake is several hundred feet below the sea-level.

so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

With the words, "Let your light shine," the INTRODUCTION of the sermon opens into the main discourse, as when a river so widens into a lake that we are hardly able to make out where the river ends, the lake begins. And yet that twelfth verse is THE TEXT OF THE SERMON. Thence onward the sermon is a closely related series of precepts. Their first section treats of doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees. The second section treats of the religious usages by them commanded and enforced. The discussion of both is preceded by the relation of the Prophet to the old Hebrew religion. This suits the occasion. For a voiceless but earnest, imploring cry from the heart of the great congregation went up to the prophet asking what might be that relation. His mighty works had awakened that inquiry; and people from far and near, from all the towns and villages of Galilee, and from beyond its borders, had flocked to hear his answer. He came there to give his answer. Looking into their minds, he said, "*Think not*"—and how real his reading of their thought makes the scene! —"*Think not* I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." That word "*fulfill*" is a master-key to the discourse; and the people at once caught the idea. For they well understood that visions of the prophets were to pass into realities, types of the law into facts. And in Christ Jesus those types and prophecies *were fulfilled*. In our Lord the law was incarnate. In him its glory was seen. And that law in its spirit, by him rightly interpreted and fully unfolded, is now the law

of his universal, everlasting kingdom. The law had a body and a soul. The body of the law was buried with Jesus in the sepulcher; with Jesus, on Easter morning, its glorified spirit arose!

To his announcement that he came to *fulfill* the law the Prophet joins—and most naturally—a warning to those who undervalue the old religion. They are told that *such have no part or share in the new.*

Then, in close logical connection with that warning, the Prophet goes on to denounce and condemn the teachers of that day who misinterpreted and perverted the old religion, saying, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom.” Of the instantly following discussion of doctrines taught and usages enforced by the scribes and Pharisees those words sum up the results beforehand. They fix the mind upon them, and they bind together the sequences of the discourse. Almost all afterward is closely related to those words, and so is all before them, the Beatitudes especially. In the harmonious development of the sermon all the parts agree in supporting and confirming each other. Something of the abiding and increasing influence of the sermon is due to this consummate excellence. It is so wonderful that if the scholastic assertion be true, that the sermon was made up by Saint Matthew out of sayings here and there by him all woven together, then the insight of the tax-collector of Capernaum into matters of eloquent reasoning was as superhuman as the insight of the Prophet of Nazareth into morals!

In his denunciation of the teaching of the scribes our Lord treats of murder, of lust, of false swearing,

and of revenge. Possibly he was mindful that heathenism had invaded Galilee and that his disciples were to carry his Gospel into the heathen world. Be that as it may, commanding alike the Gentile and the Jew, he enlarges the scope of divine laws, saying, "Thus it was said of old time, but *thus I say* unto you." Just before he had said *he came to fulfill the law that was of old*, and *therefore* there can have been from him no contradiction of its enactments. Any semblance of this can only be from his way of freeing the spirit that dwelt in the law; from his bold and striking way of putting forth a difference that was a difference only in degree.

And what manner of man is this who re-enacts commands of God? In doing *that* Jesus claimed that he was more than man. Thus early he asserted his true divinity; and when thus early he said "he came to fulfill the law and the prophets" he prophesied of the whole of his holy life, even to its sacrificial end.

In the Old Testament the Being of God is the ground of the divine law. Sometimes it gives natural or special reasons for precepts; but it finds the highest, truest sanction for his laws in God himself. "I am the Lord" is the solemn prelude to the Ten Commandments. In the midst of, or after other enactments, again and again, *it is written*, "Ye shall keep my ordinances; I am the Lord," and—to give a few examples, and such as are all the more striking because the laws treat of everyday things—*it is written*, "Thou shalt not put a stumbling-block before the blind; *I am the Lord.*" "Thou shalt not wholly glean the corners of thy field, nor shalt thou gather every grape in thy vine-



yard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger; *I am the Lord.*" "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man; *I am the Lord.*"

In the New Testament the chief apostle in his first general epistle thus enjoins the duty of holiness: "*It is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.*" Our Lord recognizes and confirms the great truth, so repeatedly set forth in the older Scriptures, by saying, "Be ye perfect, for your Father in heaven is perfect." \* And the first grand division of the sermon closes with the affirmation of the truth which in the Old Testament is the ground and basis of the divine laws.

The second division of the sermon treats of religious usages. In what it says of almsgiving, of prayer, and of fasting it illustrates and enforces the spirit in which all usages are to be observed. Its key-note is this: "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness to be seen of men." With this it begins and with this it ends. From v, 48, to vi, 19, it warns against trumpeting charities. Warning against praying to be seen of men, it gives a form of prayer; and in

\* Those words on the mount may have been the same as these words of the Sermon on the Plain, "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke vi, 36). For at times it requires more than one word or one form of words to bring out in a translation all the fullness of a thought-freighted line or word; and as one translator may give one side of the idea, and one another side, is it not possible that in the Aramean those words were the same at both times? If so, the two inspired Greek versions, when side by side, reveal that mercy is the perfection of God. I put this forward with diffidence; yet, as in each sermon the same trains of thought (though not the same words) go before and come after that verse, may there not here be confirmation of a profound and lovable truth, which, however, on other scriptural grounds is certain?

no other way could so much instruction have been so condensed, in no other way so fixed in memory, so graven on the heart.

Children in their use of the familiar yet sacred name "Father" include all their brothers and sisters; and in this universal prayer "*Our Father*" brings to mind the whole family of Christ. "Which art in heaven" lifts the heart out of the doubt and darkness of our earthly lives. "Hallowed be thy name" needs elucidation from the scriptural idea of naming and of names. God brought to Adam each beast of the field and fowl of the air to see how Adam would name them. In early ages a world of thought went to the giving of names. The name was a compend of what was known of a thing or thought to be known. By its name men tried to mark that by which the being or thing named differed from all others. They tried to express its distinctive character or quality, but in every thing there is the unknown and unknowable; and the names given by man can only express the manifest qualities or attributes of a being or thing.

The ancient, Oriental, and scriptural ideas as to naming and names, like those as to time and the world, did not pass over from Asia to Europe. Thus many fruitful ideas were lost; and of the world's early effort and wisdom in naming and in names the words remain like mounds whose builders and whose reasons for building are both forgotten.\*

In the line "Hallowed be thy NAME" *the force*

\* For remarks upon the bearing of scriptural ideas and usage as to naming and names on the interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis, see *Church and Science*.

*and meaning of the first word* now is unknown and unfelt. Yet why does the word *name* come in? Possibly some may think that the intent is to prohibit the habit of swearing; but, generally, people are innocent of a notion so ill-fitting the greatness of all else in the prayer, for they give no thought to the *last word* in the line. And yet *that word* is fraught with deepest, holiest suggestion and meaning. "God dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto." "No man hath seen God at any time." "Neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Therefore, in the old Oriental scriptural significance of the word Christ Jesus is God's Name; for all that man may know of the Godhead is in and through the revealing by the Holy Spirit of the Eternal Word, who was incarnate in the Child of the blessed Virgin. And, therefore, "Hallowed be thy name" should make us think of what we know of God and of what is hidden; "Our Father" and "Hallowed be thy name" should blend *child-like trust with lowliest adoration*.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." This, the first petition, should have the first place in every heart. And, in our Lord's teaching his children thus to pray, is there not a promise and a prophecy? Could he have taught his children every-where to pray for what is never to come to pass? And yet the fulfilling of that promise and prophecy comes only in the new earth, under the new heavens.

The next petition, "Give *us* this day *our* daily bread," is a personal and a general petition. And here—as often the case in both common and scriptural

speech—words have more than one sense. Here two prayers go hand in hand—prayer for bread for the body and prayer for bread for the soul. And the asking only for bread, and for one day only, restrains us from worldliness. The next petition, asking that God will forgive us as we forgive others, enjoins a forgiving spirit.\* It reminds the unforgiver that he judges and condemns himself. Thus by his way of laying down his command the Saviour helps. “Lead us not into temptation” guards against running into it; and manifestly the form of prayer is divine not only in its bringing all prayer within the compass of a few simple words, but also in its persuasion to well-doing and its holding back from evil.

After the giving of the form of prayer the line of thought is the same as before, namely, that there must be no parade of good works. This line of thought, as thus developed, would be *too narrow for the breadth of the discourse were it not for the broadening of the universal prayer*. That so brings it into keeping with the greatness of the sermon that, from a purely rhetorical point of view, it is one of the most striking and admirable of the single features of the discourse; and yet there are critics (?) who say that the presence here of the universal prayer is

\* Ἐπιούσιον—not found in classic Greek, and in the New Testament only in this prayer. Cyrus Hamlin tells me that the gospels read very much like modern Greek, and M. Paspanti, of Athens, says of the word here (as to whose meaning there has been much question), “The word is in general use among the Greeks. Poor people complain that they cannot get their ἐπιούσιον, ‘bread.’ It means whatever can sustain life. The word has nothing to do with *daily*; and the line may be rendered, ‘Give us *this day* the bread to sustain us.’”

evidence that Saint Matthew made up the sermon out of words spoken at another time!

Passing on to fasting, our Lord also warns against the doing of this to be seen of men, and then gives this command, which is the sequel to those before it, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

This brings the third division of the discourse to a close, and it also begins its fourth section, in which there is less of direct reference to the old Scripture. This section treats of wealth, charity in judging, and reserve in imparting truth. As to the last there is but a word, while the instructions as to riches read from the nineteenth verse of chapter vi to its end.

Eloquence persuades rather than teaches, and this discourse is didactic; yet tenderness and sympathy so pervade all the sweep and force of those fifteen verses, all their argument and instruction so kindles with persuasion, that those verses are the ideal of eloquence. Our Lord repeated its much-needed words at another time and place; and it would not be strange were it on record that he did so more than once; for, speaking from day to day on the same subjects and to persons and classes much the same, our Lord was in the habit of repeating; *but that this passage is a part of the sermon is proved by the fact that its first verse (chap. vi, 19) is a transition verse.* It belongs to what goes before and what comes after.

Within itself the passage is closely bound together. The antithesis in its first verse between heaven and earth leads on to the antithesis between God and mammon, and that leads on to teachings which disarm

mammon. Those fifteen verses are a close argument and an outburst of feeling. The ideas are fused, as if poured molten from a furnace. Splinters can be broken off as from a ledge whose atoms were melted into rock by the central fires; but if those fifteen verses are not a living part of a sermon which is a living whole logic has no power to bind, and words cannot convey the relations of feeling and thoughts.

Our time, with inequalities more perilous than ever before, is troubled by the insatiate greed of those who have much, alarmed by the angry cries of those who have little, and it stands in great need of this pleading of the Son of man. He argues with the poor that God knows their need, till, pitying both rich and poor, in the words, "*Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*," the iron reasoning melts in the warmth of his heart. With him who came to seek and to save the lost *this is true of all*—true of the well and of the sick, of the young and the old, of the widow at the bier of her only son, and of the bride at the altar, of the broken-hearted, of the successful merchant, of the king a prisoner and the king who conquered at Sedan. Verily, the divine wisdom, the divine mercy, did come down to this earth, for *lo and behold*, a footprint of the Son of God!

Christ Jesus would have all rich in treasure which moth and rust do not corrupt. Both the poor and the rich alike may lay up incorruptible treasure; for merciful words and righteous deeds, pity for the erring, kind warning, good testimony fearlessly borne, truth believed and confessed, holy impulses, repentant tears, each sin renounced, each martyr-like purpose to press onward in spite of doubt, temptation,



or sin, the glow of love toward God, of charity for man, are treasures laid up in heaven.

Our Saviour pleads with and for the poor; he then says, "Judge not," and the close connection of this with what goes before is as plain as its wisdom. Yet this law of the merciful Sinai is little regarded, although no one can know the strength of another's temptation, and though the law joins to the commandment this strong motive to obedience, "With what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged."

This precept is then linked on to the chain, "Cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye"—a precept that carries sarcastic reproof of self-conceit, and teaches that to do good one must be good. Then, in subtile yet logical and close connection, this caution follows: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

A series of promises then seems to change the structure of the discourse; but those promises so lead up to the golden rule that the structure of the sermon still is the same. Our Saviour, knowing that men would feel they could not keep that rule, thus pledged beforehand the resources of omnipotence to those who would try to keep it, "Ask, and ye shall receive." After that and other encouraging promises he said, "THEREFORE whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." With his golden rule the Preacher clinched the unity of his sermon. For, verily, they who keep that rule are worthy of the blessings with which the sermon opens;

*they are the salt of the earth, the light of the world.* And the Lord Jesus, by his golden rule, clinched the unity of the Bible, for early in his sermon he said that he came not to destroy but to fulfill the law; and here at the close of his sermon he declares that the golden rule of his universal, everlasting kingdom is the sum "of all the law and all the prophets."

The brief conclusion of the discourse may be subdivided into exhortation and warning. After telling that "strait is the gate, narrow the way," our Saviour, in words pointing back to what he had said of the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees, warns against false teachers from without, and he also warns against the falseness of the heart within—a warning in harmony with the tone of the whole discourse. With those warnings comes a striking figure. In eloquence there is none more perfect or more appropriate. "*Therefore*" joins this figure to all our Lord had said, and enforcing it all in a way not to be forgotten the figure ends the sermon.

The sermon was early in our Lord's teaching. It does not include it all. Its hearers were not fitted to receive all the truth of the great redemption. Into the sermon is inwrought the truth that Jesus is the Christ, and of a rank far higher than the Jews commonly ascribed to the Messiah, but this is not made prominent. The law, recognized and affirmed, is spiritualized and transfigured; but Jewish errors are overcome not so much by open assault as by setting forth the graces of the kingdom. It is plainly said that the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees is unrighteousness; but there is no such unsparing exposure and denunciation of their wickedness as at

later times. The whole discourse is so framed as to teach things new and strange without giving needless offense; yet how wonderful that a discourse so disappointing the passionate hopes and expectations of the people could have been so framed as not to turn against the Prophet all the hearts which were turning toward him. Sharp the contrast of its teaching and its truths with Jewish hopes and expectations; and they are not less so with the desires and passions of all human hearts.

The sermon was not long, though we always feel as if it were. It was preached in thirty minutes, and when we number up the things it treats of its brevity is amazing! And still more so its unity! Of that unity the cause is something far deeper and more effective than constructive skill. The outlines of the sermon are traceable; its parts and their fitting in can be pointed out; but all such comment is superficial; all such rhetorical analysis and division relates only to form. This oceanic river of light is a swift unbroken onflow of blended thought, feeling, and will. And *the unity of this discourse*, which harmonizes an undeveloped religion with a complete religion, which lays down new and various commands, treats of usages, utters new truths, makes wise unto salvation, proves it one discourse as surely as its truth and wisdom prove it from the Lord.

No more convincing tests of authenticity can be applied to any word ever spoken. To touch upon two only, it was fitted to the time and to all time. The roots of this tree are in Galilean ground. Its branches have widely spread. This sermon has gone forth into all lands, its words to the ends of the

world. But, though its spirit be universal and its power everlasting, it was suited to its hearers. In it there was much they could not fathom, nothing by which they could not profit.

The Prophet claims that his truth is new and is truth for all. History bears witness to the claim. Christ Jesus then declared truth unknown to the schools of Tarsus or of Athens, of Alexandria or Jerusalem. And now the prayer that on a hill of Galilee he gave centuries ago is repeated every day and every hour of the day, in languages then unspoken, in continents and islands then undiscovered, by Christians whose barbaric ancestors that day were offering bloody sacrifices and worshiping idols in their forests. Then the glory of the ancient world was at its height. Its forms of thought, its power, its pride, have passed away; but throughout the civilized world the sermon now enlightens and guides the pilgrimage of man. There is little reasonable hope of discoveries in doctrines. The great Christian doctrines have been determined and established by controversies and councils, by the assent of ages, by the witness of the Holy Ghost. Discovery now lies in the direction of duties, and the sermon is a chart of the duty of man.

The proof that in the sermon the Lord Christ was closing one great cycle of time and opening a greater is to be found in his whole life on earth and in whatever may be known of his dominion since; yet by the construction of the earlier portion of his gospel his inspired evangelist clearly gives us to understand that the sermon was an epoch in his mission; and in reflecting upon this there vividly comes up the truth that beforehand human affairs were divinely prepared for

the coming of Christ Jesus, and that from his coming they took a new departure.

Then in the world's outer courts there were savages of whom history hardly takes more notice than of the leaves in their forests; farther within the world-circle there were half-civilized tribes in whom hardly any principle of progress is visible; there were cultured nations; and the Hebrew race was the soul of the world. As there are now savages and half-civilized tribes without the cycle of Christianity it is not to be thought that on looking back for nineteen hundred years we can see the signs of any relations then between them and the coming of the Christ; but we may see that such was then the state of things in the Roman Empire that Christ "came in the fullness of time." The history of the ancient world unfolded with dramatic unity. Orb after orb of dominion unrolled, each inclosing within it those before, till at last the Roman circle was coincident with the circle of civilization. Many were the rivers that kept on their seemingly aimless way until lost in the sea of the empire. To what end was their outflowing and comingling? For what was that long funereal procession of the nations? Was it only for the imperial corruption soon to be buried out of sight? There is atheism in the thought. Carthage, Corinth, Jerusalem perished. The flood devoured, the waters prevailed exceedingly. The high hills were covered, yet amid the clouds of that deluge the rainbow of the promise that no other dominion should prevail over the earth save the dominion of the Son of man spanned the heavens; and recompense is seen for the agony of those ages of the birth and being of the

Roman dominion, when in the empire there is seen a divine preparation for the coming of the Eternal Word in form as a man.

In his last will and testament Cæsar Augustus counseled his successors not to enlarge their dominions. In his reign Christ was born. For him the *will* of Julius and the *fortune* of Augustus Cæsar were fore-ordained. For him Alexander made the Greek language familiar to the world. For him was the intercourse and intercommunion of the nations of the empire which encircled the midland sea.

Long had the Hebrew religion struggled with the idolatry of Canaan and Phenicia, of Egypt and Assyria; but at last the Hebrews worshiped the living God. In the meantime among other peoples the vitality of idol-worship had nearly passed away, though its forms survived. Unknowingly the nations kept step and time.

The Roman republic neither imposed its own religion on conquered nations nor forbade theirs; and for a time the Cæsars were guided by its policy. There was never before so favorable a state of things for the spread of a new religion. It were hard to imagine a more favorable one. Still it was a perilous crisis, and to human view a hopeless one. The morality which had done much for the beauty of Greece and the strength of Rome was absorbed and lost in its own creations. Within the temple and within the outer courts religious progress had come to an end. The decisive hour of the future struck, for man rises only to fall if he keeps not his upward way. To the Hebrews idolatry was no longer a temptation; but would they worship God in spirit



and in truth? The nothingness of their gods was discovered by the heathen; but would they open their eyes to see, and their hearts to welcome, the living God? These momentous questions were deciding adversely. Both the unspirituality of Jerusalem and the agnosticism of the nations were tending toward atheism. But for the coming of the Christ there would have been a second fall of man. To him the old time converges. With him a new time begins. He stands between the ancient and the modern world, himself the difference.

Kings and peoples, in ways and in ages widely apart, had prepared his way, not knowing what they did. One people elected and trained to teach others had come to own no God but Jehovah; the others had come to despise their false gods. Yet religious truth and religious feelings were dying; and liberty, of which they were the life, was dead. In the holy city symbols were put in the place of the things which they signified. The elect guardians of the faith were faithless. Beneath the wings of the cherubim religion was dying. *Then* was born of the blessed Virgin the Holy Child, of whom the sign and assurance in sacrifice was coeval with the advent of sin and death. Then from the Mount of Blessing his word went forth. And the Redeemer did not make the ultimate ground of obedience to his word its conformity to human reasonings, its beauty or its usefulness. He centered its sovereignty in his own Being when, revealing that all truth in nature and in life is in and through himself, he said, "I AM THE TRUTH."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## PLAN AND PURPOSE OF CHAPTERS VIII AND IX.

THERE is proof in Saint Matthew's eighth and ninth chapters that his plan has thus far been correctly stated. In those chapters some things are told that happened before the sermon; and some things that happened in its time, but are not so well suited to its design, are told afterward. The cleansing of the leper, the healing of the paralytic, the call of Matthew, were before its time; all in the sixteenth chapter and part of that in the twelfth was in its time; the stilling of the storm, the cure of the Gadarene demoniacs, the coming of John's disciples, the raising of Jairus's daughter, the cure of the woman and of the blind man, were after its time. Therefore, scholars not having discovered Saint Matthew's intent in this section, and the principle on which its facts were selected, say that in those two chapters the facts are given with no order and no definite aim.

Yet the resemblance of a want of order comes only from Saint Matthew's design to make this section a picture of the life of our Lord in Galilee. It includes the whole circle of Galilean personages and events. It is a panorama of the time. Here are the blind, the leper, the demoniacs, the sick; here is a Roman officer, a ruler of the synagogue, disciples of Christ, disciples of John, the scribes and the Pharisees; and what others came into relation with Christ in

Galilee? If this view of the rhetorical intent of this section be correct here we may look for the words, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head;" and here they are, though said at a later day, and in a different part of the country. And here for the first time in this gospel our Lord calls himself the Son of man, a name he used more than any other.\*

Looking upon this portraiture of our Lord's way and manner of life, let us again think of Saint Matthew's descriptive talent. He tells of the things he most deeply felt; and he loves to trace the on-goings of the soul from thought to thought, from feeling to feeling, and their relations to words and actions. He puts us *en rapport* with the spirit of things. Blind critics, blind to this fine effect, deny that his descrip-

\* Save from the lips of our Lord the name is heard in the New Testament thrice only—in the vision of Saint Stephen, and twice in those of the Apocalypse. The apostles never used it. Yet our Lord used it more than eighty times. He used it when revealing things concerning himself. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John xii, 32). In words then said the name was used, for "the people answered, How sayest thou the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii, 14). "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world" (Matt. xiii, 37). "The Father hath given to the Son authority to execute judgment *because he is the Son of man.*" "In his glory the Son of man shall come, and all his holy angels with him" (Matt. xxv, 31). See also many other verses, and especially Matt. xxvi, where our Lord, using this name, which reminds of the sorrow and humility of the human lot, applies to himself that prophecy in Dan. vii, 13, of his universal and eternal kingdom, in which this title had its origin.

tions are those of an eye-witness; and yet his portraiture has greater power than ordinary description to call up before the mind's eye the persons whose hearts it opens. "If I may but touch the hem of his garment" brings up the humble, hopeful face of the feeble old woman. When the leper cries, "Lord, if thou wilt," we feel the imploring look. The centurion is with us; and we know the Pharisee and the Sadducee when they say, "This man casteth out devils through the prince of the devils."

In Saint Luke the ruler's little daughter "lay a dying." Her father runs, but before he gets to the Worker of miracles he feels that she must have gone. He cries out, "My child is dying! O, she is dead!" Both Saint Mark and Saint Luke state her case as her father knew it when he left home; Saint Matthew as the father felt it *then must be*, and as in fact it was.

Saint Mark and Saint Luke both tell of things at the house; Saint Matthew only contrasts the hired wailing, the incredulous scorn of any one's helping the dead girl, with "he took her by the hand and the maid arose."

The story of the centurion so grandly manifests the impression made by the life of our Lord that it would probably have come into this section had it not been of its time; but in what a characteristic way the story is told! The collector of tribute knew the captain of the guard. Saint Matthew knew the Gentile had built a synagogue; and why did he pass that over? Why pass over the deputation of Jews? Why pass over the deputation which under an escort of soldiers comes with the officer himself? Because in his own

mind they were things of little moment in comparison with the impression made on the Roman. They were not needed to bring out *that*, and would have turned away thought from his marvelous witness which Saint Matthew meant to give, and did give, with undivided, unweakened power.

And there is thoughtful constructive skill in placing the story of the centurion side by side with the healing of the leper. Before the sending out of the twelve Saint Matthew rather emphasizes the mission to the Jews, yet ever keeps in mind that it is to unfold into a wider mission. An erroneous conclusion was likely to be drawn from the telling the leper "to do what Moses commanded;" therefore he puts with it a miracle of which there are but two of the kind in the gospels—a miracle wrought for a Gentile; and because our Lord then said, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness."

A common opinion comes out in our Lord's saying of an excommunicated person, "Let him be to thee as a heathen man *and a publican*;" yet many "publicans and sinners" came to the "great" feast and sat down with Jesus. Pharisees, only too glad to find something to condemn, seize on the chance of that shock to propriety and tamper with his disciples till the Master puts them to shame by words, sarcastic as addressed to them, but full of compassion for others, "I came *not to call the righteous*, but sinners to repentance." The running in of the father breaks up the feast. As Jesus goes to

raise his daughter to life a woman who had suffered for twelve years, encouraged by the strange thing that he was going to save *a woman*, ventures to touch the hem of his garment. And this full record of the varied converse and occurrences of one busy day agrees with and confirms the idea that it was the evangelist's purpose in that section to portray our Lord's daily walk and conversation.

There the glory of Jesus is reflected from the hearts around. A dumb man speaks, the people cry, "This was never before seen in Israel;" the paralytic walks, "they glorify God;" the storm is stilled, and the disciples whisper one to another, "What manner of man is this?"

The courtesy, kindness, tenderness that temper to the heart the brightness of the glory of the Son of God is felt in his saying, "Son, be of good cheer," "Daughter, be of good comfort;" of women of ill-fame, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick;" and in the words from Isaiah, "He took our infirmities." These things make more touching the words which touch the home feeling, "The Son of man has not where to lay his head." Nor is there wanting an allusion to the days when the bridegroom shall be taken from the bride. In the portraiture in those chapters of Christ Jesus by the shore and on the waters of the Sea of Galilee, the mercy, the self-devotion of our Saviour, the gentle, gracious ways, the insight into the soul, the lowly estate, the superhuman powers, are seen as they blended into harmony in the faithful holy heart of his chosen evangelist. With a single exception the lake and its shore is never left. This,



however, is a minor cause of the unity of the description. Its free and seemingly careless grouping is like that of nature when, with no seeming effort or design, she groups fields and woods and hills and rocks and streams in one harmonious landscape.

In this section there is more than the outward features of the time. Much of the life of the disciples is foretold by their behavior in the storm, frightened, yet calling on their Lord. The evil words of the Pharisees portend the evil they will do. That the bridegroom shall be taken away pre-intimates the sorrows to come. The seeds of all the future are sown in this little plot of ground.

The gospel writers had to form a just and true idea of One greater than themselves. This they could not do, for to form a just and true idea of a great man one must be equally great. *That this they did* is proof that the Holy Spirit gave them understanding. It was beyond their natural powers rightly to convey to others a just and true idea of One greater than his time, greater than man, a just and true idea of him who was Son of man and Son of God. *That this they did* is proof that the Holy Spirit inspired their utterance. And the evangelists were so individualized, so unlike in mental qualities, that the oneness of their portraiture of Christ Jesus proves that the Spirit breathed through their souls, as a musician breathes through different instruments the notes of the same piece of music.

In a literary point of view the eighth and ninth chapters of the earliest gospel have been ruthlessly and ignorantly treated by irreverent and even by some orthodox critics; yet they have a well-chosen place in

the earliest evangel and in the Evangeliad as an organic whole; and while in all respects perfectly fulfilling the design of the inspired evangelist they do so in one not yet pointed out. The section leads on from the word on the mount to the word to the twelve. It makes ready for that word, as the section from the twelfth to the twenty-fifth verse of chapter iv made ready for the word on the mount. And the hand that wrote the conclusion of that section wrote the similar conclusion of this: "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

## CHAPTER IX.

ON MIRACLES.—(CHAPTERS VIII AND IX CONTINUED.)

SOME look upon the eighth and ninth chapters of Saint Matthew as a description of the Saviour as a worker of miracles. This view, though not seeing all, is more clear-sighted than the one which in them sees only a medley of facts. The breadth of the supernatural and superhuman powers of Jesus is shown in their selected miracles. They prove that he had dominion over nature, over demons, over sickness and death. And they bring out the relation of faith to the miracles of our Lord. That is felt in his answer to "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean." It is felt when the ruler said, "My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live;" and Jesus arose and followed him; when to the blind man, "Be it according to your faith;" and when to her who touched the hem of his garment, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." The stilling of the storm was from our Lord's concern for his terrified disciples; yet in their cry there was somewhat of faith as well as a great deal of fear. At times the faith of others was sufficient, as in the case of the centurion's servant, and of the palsied man. The wretched demoniacs at Gadara could make no prayer. And the self-moved kindness and tenderness of the Lord is known in the healing of the mother of Peter's wife,

who in her "*great fever*" was delirious or unconscious. According to Saint Mark and Saint Luke her cure was in answer to the entreaty of others. Of that Saint Matthew says nothing. He gives another motive though not a contradictory one; for the motive from without excludes not a motive from within. The lesson in the other evangelists is taught elsewhere in the section, and here Christ Jesus of his own impulse heals the aged matron of the house then to him a home.

Carrying out his design with fullness and thoroughness, Saint Matthew records that even when disease was a direct consequence of sin the Saviour might heal the sinner; for, "that the scribes might know that the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy, Arise, and go unto thine house." Several of the miracles are of surpassing greatness; yet such are selected and are so told that the soul is as deeply touched by the manifestation of the feelings of Christ as by those mighty works; though in the narrative the impression their spontaneous energy made on eye-witnesses of the majesty of the Lord lives forever.

Before his eighth chapter Saint Matthew describes no miracle. In his witness to Christ Jesus the word on the mount takes precedence of any thing of that kind. Throughout his evangel more room is given to the words than to the works of the Lord. And this is in harmony with the first verse of Saint John, who, pointing back to the first verse of the Bible, says: "*In the beginning was the Word. All things were made by him; and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*"

Our Lord himself said, "The works which my Father hath given me to do bear witness;" and yet to get a true idea of the right place and due weight of his miracles in the manifestation of the manifold evidence of his divinity his word to the twelve should be diligently considered: "Rejoice not that spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven;" and this word also: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these."

Very differently the Lord of nature thought of the laws he gave to nature from those who worship those laws! Can there be greater works in the realm of nature than the stilling of the storm? Is it not plain that our Lord thought it was a lesser work to cleanse the leprosy of the body than the leprosy of the mind? less to open blind eyes than to enlighten darkness of heart? less to quicken a dead body than to quicken a dead soul? It is one of the laws of the manifestation of his kingdom that the lower shall ever be giving place to the higher. "In the beginning" this was the law; for in each of the cycles of creation the evening gave place to the morning. Through this invincible law *the lower physical miracles of the time when our Lord was on the earth gave way before the coming in of a higher order of spiritual miracles*. The former belonged to a receding dispensation; and in these things is the answer to the question, *Have miracles ceased?* Miracles have passed on from a lower to a higher sphere; from "the seen" to "the unseen;" from the world of nature to the world of spirit where spiritual miracles, daily, hourly, are wrought by the Holy Ghost

in answer to the prayer of faith—miracles far greater than those which typified and prophesied of the later and higher miracles.

*Possibly* in heathen lands, in rude, half-Christianized districts, or elsewhere in most uncommon circumstances they do linger; yet whether that be so can only be settled by appropriate, sufficient evidence; and to hope and long for the signs and wonders of an age that is finished, and tenaciously to try to hold on to its lesser, lower things, is not to go onward and upward. Nor will those who will not believe in the miracles wrought by the Holy Spirit in imperishable souls be greatly moved by marvels wrought in rheumatic or in half-paralyzed bodies, made to last but threescore years and ten.

The Jews asked of Jesus *τέρας καὶ σημεῖον*, a wonder and sign, and he said of the sign of the prophet Jonah words then dark, but luminous now. In the old time the history of that prophet is the most incredible of all things, because it is the most incredible of all things in the new time—the sign foretelling that the body of the Lord and Giver of life would lay dead in the sepulcher for three days. The prophet cast into the sea, and cut off, as it were, from time and space, yet after three days and nights coming forth alive, was a type of the Christ, express and pre-eminent above every other type; for Christ Jesus said the *sign* he would give would be the sign of the prophet Jonah, thus revealing *that his sign is the resurrection*, of which *it is written*, “God raised him from the dead, thereby bearing him witness.”

Our Lord’s miracles prove his divinity; but in



proof of that fact they should be used in rightful combination with all its many other proofs. And it may be frankly admitted that some of the miracles of our Lord may not transcend the possible achievements of man, for the possibilities of our developing and growing powers are unknown. There were miracles *to which this cannot possibly apply*; but even as to our Lord's miracles of omnipotent creative energy it should be remembered, in the controversy, doubt, and denial of these "last times," that Christ Jesus's miracles are not the only proof of his divinity. They who deny them peril their souls, but are not called upon to believe in him *solely* because of his miracles.

Yet our Lord speaks by his actions, and some of his characteristics are best known from his human ways in his superhuman works. In them there is tenderness without weakness, pity that does not wound, graciousness without patronizing condescension, the lovely traits of which an old dramatist so well said:

"The best of men  
That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer,  
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,  
*The first true gentleman that ever breathed.*"

They greatly err who fancy that, apart from his miracles, they can form a credible, trustworthy, consistent conception of the Son of man. Take away the superhuman from his life, and the human becomes colorless; for though our knowledge of his humanity be the ground of our knowledge of his divinity, yet our deepest, truest knowledge of his human nature comes through his mighty works. He is more

real than any historic person, because in the strong light of his divinity shining through his miracles the human is so clearly seen in vivid contrast with the superhuman, as when "Jesus wept" at the grave of Lazarus.

There is no direct mention of the miracles of Christ in the epistles; not an allusion to the stilling of the storm, the calling of the ruler's daughter or of Lazarus from the dead, or to any of the others. If we hope to glean any further details as to what took place at Nain or Cana, we find nothing. Even to the miracles in their own time the allusions are slight and few. And, well remembering the start and hush of wonder when these things were first known to me, I would ask my friendly and tireless readers to meditate on this strange silence; for skeptics with unusual force argue from it that the gospels are legendary and later than the epistles. The second count, however, in this indictment must be struck out; for, as stated in the Acts, miracles were common in the apostolic generation, and with lawyers trained to weigh evidence the slight and few references to them in the epistles may be of greater weight than if more were said about them. This does not touch the more alarming count, namely, that not a miracle wrought by our Lord is directly named. But against this there might be set off the fact that in the epistles there is no mention of our Lord's having spoken to any one—to the centurion, to Zaccheus, or to Mary, for instance—which is similar and equally good evidence that he never spoke to any one. And that skeptical reasoning does not take into account that Saint Peter in his second general epistle says he was

in the holy mount in the superhuman hour of the transfiguration, or that the apostles with earnest reiteration speak of the great miracle of the resurrection of Jesus, which makes all the other miracles credible, saying, "Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose the third day according to the Scriptures; if Christ be not risen we are false witnesses, and ye are yet in your sins;" or that they dwell upon the eternal being, the creative glory, the dominion of the Lord over earth and heaven.

There was not the restraint in the writing of the epistles there was in the writing of the gospels. The evangelists bear witness to what our Lord said and did, and there they are stayed. They were not suffered to give utterance to their conceptions of the Lord other than through facts. No anthems of praise were permitted in the Evangeliad. The prelude to Saint John's gospel is no exception; it is a statement of great facts in plain and simple words. But in their letters the apostles were suffered to utter truths concerning the being and glory of Christ Jesus that were inbreathed into their hearts by the Holy Spirit. And, beholding the sun in its brightness, they could not recall its transitory rays that before, from time to time, had shone through rents in the clouds. In such hours there was no room in hearts so overfilled for the memory of the miracles that Jesus wrought during his life on the earth. Their remembering that remembered not was that of the traveler who thinks not of the path by which he climbed the mountain when his soul is busy with the grandeur that at last opens before his eyes. And when the reason for what was so startling is seen,

then the holy apostles are so high above us that we feel toward them as Saint John felt toward the angel when he fell at his feet and would have worshiped him.

Miracles are not the measure of the greatness of our Lord of which those holy men were moved by the Holy Ghost to speak. The whole broad earth is too small for its manifestation. The field of the universe is not ample enough to show forth all the glory of the Creator of space and time. Here, then, is the reason why the holy apostles, in letters to those who were familiar with his life on earth, did not enforce their revelations of his glory by his miracles. They could not recall his stilling of the winds when thus communing with the Lord: "The heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest: as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." They could not think of the loaves of bread when remembering that "all things that are in heaven and earth, visible or invisible, were made by him." They could not remember the son of the widow of Nain, or the daughter of Jairus, while thinking that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." When the Epistle to the Hebrews opens thus, "God, who at sundry times, in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," we, not being in full, intelligent sympathy with the speaker's elevation of soul, think he will go on to say, "who cured the man blind from his birth," or "called forth Lazarus from his tomb," and when he says, "whom he hath

made heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds," we feel that his Spirit is in a region of thought above that of miracles, is in a sphere higher than where such effects were wrought, that full on him is shining the eternal glory of their INFINITE CAUSE.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE WONDER AND SIGN AT GADARA—DEMON-POSSESSION.—(CHAPTERS VIII AND IX CONTINUED.)

“MILLIONS of spiritual creatures walk the earth  
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep,”

and their ceaseless influences for good or ill are so many and great that the demon-possession to which the gospels witness is a little item in the great account, a small matter by the side of the larger fact. Yet in the system of Christianity it is of much consequence; and the question whether there ever was such a thing becomes a serious one through its relation to the prevalent disposition to doubt or deny the influences and even the existence of that superhuman world of which the human world is but a province. Some think that demon-possession never could have been, and give up the Scriptures because they say it was. And as infidels, in trying to discredit the gospels for what they record and reveal concerning it, fasten upon the wonder and sign at Gadara, there the question can be considered better than elsewhere.

Some good people would ingeniously rid themselves of the uncomfortable thought of a thing so strange and horrible by saying that the holy evangelists in the current language of their country and time spoke of lunatics as possessed; but in the gospels the demonized are distinguished from the insane. They also say that Jesus talked to the demonized as wise



keepers of madmen talk to patients whose delusions they humor; but our Lord recognized the common belief when no demoniacs were present. They farther say that he accommodated his language to the notions of those about him; but he told his disciples, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer;" and to say those words were accommodated to their Jewish errors is to charge Him who is the Truth with an untruthful, time-serving policy.

Yet, as demon-possession so often seems too awful for belief, let me try to lessen, if I cannot quiet, this feeling. Its victims were those only in whom the unifying, individualizing life-principle was weak, either naturally so or through disease. Its victims never were many. They were only *some* of those with unhealthy, nervous systems.\* Their paroxysms were not continuous. Some, perhaps most of them, did not suffer any more, or not as much, as some invalids suffer. And the common mistake of thinking that the visitation must have been a consequence of awful guilt makes it more awful than it was. The demoniacs may have been the most pitiable, but they were not the most wicked, of human beings. Our Lord and his evangelists give no countenance to that idea, directly or indirectly. And the demoniac at the foot of Mount Hermon, whose case was a bad one, had been afflicted from a child.

\* Most of the cases were in the deep cleft of the Jordan. Its lake is some 600, the Dead Sea some 1,300, feet below the level of the ocean, and the plain of Jericho glows with a fiercer heat than that of India. In the salubrious hill-country in and about Jerusalem, a city which stands some 2,300 feet above the sea-level, no cases are recorded. This is noted in a recent irreligious novel; but I had marked the fact years before *Philocristus* was published.

Of the recorded cases those at Gadara are the most remarkable. This agrees with what has been said of the selection of miracles for the section that comes after the sermon, which shows the breadth of our Redeemer's supernatural powers. The story is thrice told.\* It is peculiar in that animals suffered from demon-influence. To some this strange thing seems a sufficient reason for disbelieving the record, and yet "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together," which is far more strange than that a few of the mute creation at Gadara shared in misery consequent upon the fall of man.

When from Capernaum the Saviour sailed for Gadara "the even had come." On the voyage there were the storm and "the great calm;" but there were only six or seven miles to sail or row. Just after the landing on the shore, lit up by the full moon, the miracle was wrought; and so on the evening of that day, when more than ever before the rage of the evil rulers of the land broke through its bounds, on the day when those ecclesiastics for the first time hurled against the Christ the charge that "he cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils," to those things on that same day the Power who ruled above the life of

\* There were two demoniacs. Saint Mark and Saint Luke name but one, doubtless the most violent and forward one. Matthew (ix, 27) speaks of the cure of two blind men, but as he alone speaks of that miracle this may or may not bear on the case before us. But when at Jericho (xx, 30) he names two blind men, and Saint Mark and Saint Luke but one, it looks as if he had more in mind the law (Deut. xix, 15), "at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses shall a matter be established," to which our Lord refers (John viii, 17), than Saint Mark and Saint Luke, who wrote among Gentiles, to whom that law was little known.

Christ offered him the occasion of giving to his own disciples timely answers of power in the stilling of the storm and at Gadara.

*For the moment* conceding that there is no demonian possession *now*, I reject the conclusion that *there never was any*. Like reasoning would prove that many of the signs and wonders of the sacred page could never have been. And phenomena of an uncommon kind are not to be denied wholly on the ground that they do not come within the limited, partial, narrow experience of any one generation.

Strong walls fence off our human world from worlds unseen. Besides the natural defenses against evil supernatural influences, there are the walls built around the soul by the Church and the State; these are broken down or decayed when a community is rent by inward strife or trembling with the palsy of age; and then the soul is thrown back upon its own lines of defense, which are weak in comparison with the ramparts of a well-ordered State and Church watched and guarded by social and moral sentinels and troops. Now, the demonism recorded in the holy gospels was when in Palestine the frame of society was shaken, when the bands of life were loosening, when the State was disintegrating and the Church was dead.

Near the close of the old time-cycle there was a change in the power of the demon-world. With historic reason Milton—most learned of poets—sang in his Hymn on the Nativity:

"The oracles are dumb,  
No voice or hideous hum  
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.

Apollo from his shrine  
 Can no more divine,  
 With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.  
 No nightly trance or breathed spell  
 Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell."

And words of our Lord reveal some lessening of evil spiritual influence and power, when to the returning seventy, gladly telling how the devils were subject through his name, he said, "I beheld Satan fall like lightning from heaven." That instant in eternity was then recalled by something in the present.

Within Christendom the Holy Spirit may so have given life and strength to the human will that it can no longer be overmastered and controlled as it was at Gadara. And the policy of "the host of the air" may have changed. For the fact that people are the less superstitious the more they are intelligent has a bad side. Science does well in banishing the ghostly train of omens, prodigies, of magic, divination, and witchcraft that once marched hand in hand with belief in the supernatural; but is there not harm as well as good in banishing superstition if belief in the supernatural is banished with it? In burning the underbrush what is the profit if the forest is burned? Disease may be driven out so rashly that paralysis comes in. Unlettered, credulous Christianity is better and wiser than Sadducean science.

They who flee from superstition to agnosticism outrun the fiends. The "principalities and powers who rule the darkness of this world" effectually work their evil will through unfaith in their existence. Worshipers of the devil are more free from the power of the devil than those who say, "There is

neither angel nor spirit." In the night of heathenism men, lost in the woods, are scared by frightful sounds and sights; but the lightning may show a trail, the moon may rise, the day may break. On sightless eyes the sun shines in vain. From blind unbelievers—willfully blind—the demons steal away as noiselessly as the pestilence from the dead, for their work is done. In the old cycle of time men were more ready to imagine and multiply marks and signs of the demon-world than to doubt or deny its influences. It then was politic for "the host of the air" to make all possible manifestations of their presence and of their power; it was then politic for Satan to mock the worship of God with oracular shrines and lying wonders; but in a Sadducean age he dismantles his shrines, quenches his magic, hushes his oracles, lest the counterfeit should stay the vanishing knowledge of the true.

On testing the assertion that there is no demon-possession *now* there are good reasons for questioning the inference that there never was any. And it is merely an assertion. It is not an established fact. Nor can it be established till there is, what there has never yet been, a thorough, unprejudiced, and impartial investigation into what now wholly passes for hysteria or lunacy, in order to find out whether in that obscure region of pathology there lurks not evidence of demoniac influences; nor until farther investigation be made into what passes for possession among natives of India and in other dark places of the earth where the mental and moral conditions are in some respects like those of ancient days. Not until all these fields are well explored and many

things that seem to bear upon it are better investigated can final judgment be passed upon the question whether every-where and at all times demon possession is now absolutely a thing of the past. And even were that established, still, when conditions like those in the end of the old time come again in the end of time, it is probable from analogy that similar evil phenomena will appear in the disintegrating and dying world. And this Scripture makes it certain: "Before the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, that wicked one will be revealed whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming, even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."

The weight of the evidence in the holy gospels of demon-possession, looked upon simply as historic evidence, has been lessened by the popular and *scholastic* error that the Jews were credulous as to the superhuman. The fact was the other way. One of their two great sects or parties were agnostics, who stoutly rejected belief in spirits and angels. When Saint Paul was in Lycaonia, at a word from him, "a cripple from his birth" "stood upright," the people cried, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men," the priest of Jupiter brought oxen and garlands and would have offered sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. With the Jews the superhuman works of Christ Jesus were not satisfactory evidence that he was the Messiah. They insisted upon stronger evidence; and though the spirit in which they asked for a sign was wrong, yet our Lord *seems* to admit that logically they were right. And if so, the Jews



reasoned better as to the supernatural than writers on the Christian evidences who have held that Christ's miracles, in and of themselves alone, are sufficient proof of his claims.

Wherefore, the opinion of the Jews that among them there were cases of demon-possession which they distinguished from cases of sickness or of madness is fair historic evidence of the fact. And the more thoroughly its evidence in the gospels, strictly and solely taken as *historic* evidence, is examined the more strongly the evidence comes out. There is no trace of excitement in the witnesses or of exaggeration in their testimony. The evangelists never intimate that the demonized were greater sinners than others. They never say, as mediæval chroniclers often say, that the devils were visible. Their frequent allusions to such facts are always consistent. And in their testimony one thing is of great weight. In the first recorded case, that in the synagogue at Capernaum,\* a demonized man cried out, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." On the eve of that memorable Sabbath "devils came out of many saying, Thou art the Son of God." And Saint Mark tells us that such was the language of all the demonized. This language of the poor demoniacs was far above the thoughts of the Jews as to Jesus, and even of his disciples at that time. To account for it by an exaltation of faculties consequent upon disease is nonsense. Those wretches in Gadara were heathenized

\*Here some try to make out a variance between Saint Matthew, who says "all," and Saint Mark, who says "*many* were healed." But common sense at once decides that Saint Mark, seeing what Saint Matthew had said, tells that there were a great many of them.

or heathen. They had not mind enough left to remember about Jesus if ever they had heard of him—of which there is no probability. And to deny or evade the unanswerable evidence of supernatural enlightenment in the facts stated by the evangelists, considered merely as honest witnesses, is to discredit all history and all testimony.

The strength of this historic evidence is great; and for those who discern things spiritual there is other evidence which is conclusive. With a divine consistency, a glimpse of which is enough to overawe the mind, the facts of the system of Christianity support each other. And if any thing could make that evasion and denial of what is revealed of Satan and his angels, taking it for a figure of speech, an allegorical picture, or personification of human passions and of natural evils suited to the crude ideas of an ignorant age, *absolutely impossible* with those who profess and call themselves Christians, *it would be what is revealed of demon-possession*. In this point of view its value is *immeasurable*; for belief in a wise and benevolent Supreme Being is bound up with the existence and powers of Satan. This word of an infidel is true: "Believe in a beneficent Creator, and you must also believe in human depravity and in the continued activity of the devil."\*

Of the man blind from his birth our Lord said, "Neither this man sinned nor his parents, but that the

\* Leslie Stephens has stronger common sense than most others of his kind. Here is another true word of his. Speaking of the *quasi* inspiration of the Bible taken up with by some who would pass for orthodox, as "fatal to the popular conception of the absolute perfection of Scripture," he exultingly cries out, "Give up a puritanic reverence for the Bible, and *every thing else is a question of time*."

works of God should be manifest in him." Now, in demon-possession an occasion was given for one much-needed manifestation of the power and sovereignty of Jesus, which in any other way could hardly have been so clearly made. In the sacramental miracles his creative power was manifest; his rule over the starry heavens in the guiding star; his control of the elements in the stilling of the storm; at Nain, at Bethany, the dead lived. But does it not seem essential to the fullness of our Saviour's self-revealing that he should manifest his sovereignty over those evil angels of whose presence he gives earnest and solemn warning from Genesis to Revelation? May it not reverently be thought that but for the occasion given by demon-possession something would have been wanting to the completeness of the revelation of the power of Christ Jesus?

Ever to be mindful that our temptations are not all from within, or from persons like unto ourselves in ignorance and weakness, somewhat lightens the burden of the mystery of life. It makes Christians more lenient toward others. It makes them fight with "the sword of the Spirit" the good fight of faith more watchfully and earnestly. Yet it is a fearful thing to "wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places;" and to give full assurance that Satan and his angels, "the god of this world and all the host of the air," are not strong enough "to separate from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord," the Saviour "*openly* triumphed over and spoiled those principalities and powers."

Demon-possession *is a strange and fearful thing*—perhaps the most strange and fearful thing in all the strange and fearful history of the fall and ruin of man! Awful, indeed, that ruin when the barriers of the soul were laid so low and so great the harm to its goodly tenement that through broken arch and ruined wall evil spirits came and sat in close companionship with the human will. No wonder many shrink from believing it! No wonder that many say there is now no such thing and there never could have been! And yet within the last half century facts have become well known that go far to disprove the impossibility of demon-possession. Without any visible media one person may paralyze the body of another, merge for a time the will of that person in his own, and make his soul as obedient as a flute to a musician. The victim of such mesmeric possession is usually of a weak, impressible temperament, and more or less diseased. Through voluntary self-abasement and self-abandonment he suffers the will of another to pass through the weakened walls of his individual life, and, entering within the veil of the flesh, to take possession of his will, control the motions of his muscles, the flow of his thoughts; and, though the victim may be exquisitely tormented by the human-possession, he cannot throw it off by his own volition.

The alleged impossibility of demon-possession passes away when persons are found who are devil-ridden of human masters, compelled, at the bidding of a will stronger than their own, to undergo processes of thought, made to shiver with cold or to burn with heat, to speak or to be silent, to cry or to laugh, to fear

or to rage, to tremble like an aspen or to sit motionless like a fakir, and who sometimes with an uneasy sense of bondage piteously implore a suspension of such outrage, a restoration to the freedom of their own rightful personality. *If a fiend were substituted for a man it would be demon-possession.*

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE WORD TO THE TWELVE.

OF Saint Matthew's gospel the seven chapters after the introduction are *the first part*—a better word here than division, for we speak not of the divisions, but of the parts of the human body, “with its many members, one body.” In this part there is a correlative harmony of greatness in the baptism with its signs and wonders, the defeat of Satan in the wilderness, and the Sermon on the Mount. In this part fourteen verses of chapter iv make ready for the sermon, to which one hundred and seven of its two hundred and twenty-two verses are given. There are but forty-eight verses in the second part of Saint Matthew's gospel. It is contained in chapter x and the last three verses\* of chapter ix. IT IS THE WORD TO THE TWELVE. This resembles in greatness the word on the mount, and, like that word, is prepared for by all that comes before it.

Had the inspired evangelist foreseen that he would be charged, as in the case of the sermon, with filling out his tenth chapter with what was said at other times and places, he could not have better guarded against the charge. *That* he did before and afterward. And when so swift a writer looks back to say, “It came to pass when Jesus had made an end of com-

\* The generally satisfactory chapter-division here is bad.



manding his disciples, he departed thence," it is a sign that he felt the greatness of the hour.

Yet those who would like to prove that the first gospel was made up of broken and poorly fitting pieces of tradition say that in Saint Luke's gospel there is a sermon at the installation of the twelve which is in the first gospel also, though of the installation it knows nothing. Their assertion, if true, would go far to make out their evil case; but they confound events that were different in time, place, and character. Saint Matthew states that the sermon given by him was delivered *on a mountain*; Saint Luke states that the sermon given in his gospel was delivered *on a plain*.

In preference to the hour of the installation of the twelve Saint Matthew selected *the greater hour of their going forth*. He wrote in the midst of those who knew the twelve by sight. He presupposes their installation in his list of their names. And the sermon at the installation so resembles the Sermon on the Mount that both are not to be looked for in his gospel. So much repetition would have ill consisted with its unity of impression.

John the Baptist sent his question to Jesus before the twelve went forth. Saint Matthew gives it afterward, because the sending out of the twelve marked a change from an earlier to a later stage in the mission of the Christ; and the better to blend and unite those two stages he brought in that message a little in advance of its time. There was no change in the eternal purpose forewritten in the ancient Scriptures and fulfilled in Christ, but there was a change in its manifestation when Christ Jesus openly began the

war which goes on till his seeming defeat and real triumph on Calvary. By sending forth disciples in his own name Christ Jesus renounced and defied the ecclesiastic authority in the land. In that hour he broke with the Sanhedrin forever. From afar he was preparing for that hour when he called disciples of John. Now the hour had come. As the marching out of camp to the mustering in of soldiers and all the preparation for a campaign, *such was the going forth of the twelve*. And the word of the Lord then fore-shadows and guides the μάχη ἀθάνατος, the unending war for all time and in all the world between the children of light and the children of darkness.

The last three verses of chapter ix \*—"Jesus, seeing the multitudes, was moved with compassion because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd"—belong with chapter x. They reveal that no cold calculations of the intellect, but the pity of the Sacred Heart, sent forth the disciples—though to fit them for the work of their lives, no doubt, was one of its reasons. The twelve are told to "pray to the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." And the evangelist so connects this with the sending forth of the twelve by Christ Jesus himself that it is not the least among the proofs in his gospel of the true divinity of his Lord.

The grant of superhuman powers to the twelve is given in the charge; and therefore Saint Matthew's anticipating it in almost the same words, and even before he calls over his roll of their names, shows that he was greatly impressed by that wonder and sign; and well he might be, for of old superhuman powers

\* Of these the thirty fifth is a transition verse.

were given by Jehovah to Moses, Joshua, Elijah; here they are given by One in the form of man.

When he sent forth the twelve the word of our Lord was one of those oracles which "the disciples understood not, but after he was risen they remembered." In such an hour the thoughts of the Christ were so far beyond, so high above the thoughts of men, that only the memory of the Holy Ghost could have recalled his word in all its fullness of truth—if it be lawful to speak of the memory of him with whom time is not. That word needs the elucidation and comment of the ages since, and will be better apprehended in the ages to come. It loses no pertinence or force by changes of manners and the lapse of time. It is the strength and comfort of those who confess Christ in these "days of the Gentiles."

Local, familiar, home-like directions fix its time and place.\* And though the disciples could then only in part have understood their Master, yet to argue from this that it could not all have been said at so early a stage in their training would disprove the word on Olivet and the farewell of their Lord. And it is a senseless cavil that the word of the Lord to the twelve is too foreboding, as well as too far-reaching, for a

\* The first gospel says nothing of the mission of the seventy; the third gives the word to them more fully than to the twelve. Of that Strauss says: "It is impossible that Jesus should dismiss his more confidential attendants with scanty rules, and that to the seventy he should make communications of much greater moment." But that Saint Luke had Saint Matthew's gospel before him accounts for his brevity in the one case and for his fullness in the other.

The instructions were similar, of course; and when the seventy are told to pray the words are the same. But with our Lord repetition was a frequent thing, as, reverently, it may be said to be with all Oriental teachers.

short mission with no sufferings immediately consequent and with only joyful results. Well might there have been somewhat of sadness in the tone of Jesus! He alludes to an awful accusation against himself. For the first time he names the cross. His herald then was a prisoner, and his cruel murder was to drive back the disciples to himself in fear and haste. He knew they were soon to drink of his cup and to be baptized with his baptism. He knew there were a few months and then the crucifixion, a few years and then the martyrdom of Stephen. The irrevocable commission of his disciples led through persecutions. They took up a work that would end only with their lives. As on their first going away from home all the future of his children comes up to a father, their temptations, dangers, sorrows, and their death; so color and form were given to our Saviour's thoughts and words by what would come to his children then with him, and to all who were to be his children. In that far-determining hour the voice of the Lord was not only for them, but for all his people—a voice forever.

He began with saying, "Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." These words are a defense against the now frequent and earnest charge that Christianity knows nothing of the virtue of patriotism. Dull and cold the soul which in the tenderness of the words, "Go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,"\*

\*In the later commission of the seventy there is no restriction to Israel; and the words here should be compared with the last words in this gospel. Besides the reason so apparent in the words themselves, there may have been a reason for his command in the preparation of the Jews in their history to receive the gospel; and the time of the mission was short.

feels not the heart of a patriot yearning over his own people! Never of their own accord would the disciples have gone to towns of the heathen Greeks where their Master never went; nor would they have gone to alien hostile heretical Samaritans.

*It is written* that when God made the world he ordained for each people "the bounds of their habitation." Therefore the saying that "Our country is the world, our countrymen mankind," is but "a glittering generality;" and the attractive idea of doing away, not only with the jealousies, rivalries, antipathies, and wars of nations, but also with their territorial, historic distinction, of making but one nation of the nations of the earth, is a specious, bewildering, unholy union of the true and the false. The love of our native land is consecrate. Sacred the love of the German for the Fatherland, of the Frenchman for the beautiful land of France, the Briton's love for

"The sea-girt isles  
That like to rich and various gems inlay  
The unadorned bosom of the deep,"

and our own love for the land where the poor find homes. Our Lord did not merge the family in the State, nor the State in the Church, nor patriotism in philanthropy. He enforced the duty of patriotism when he wept over the city. He was the Son of man; yet for him no people were like the children of Israel, no village like Nazareth,\* no town like Jerusalem.

\*This is seen in his second visit there, after what he met with on his first visit.

After the disciples were told to go only to the house of Israel the minute rules for their dress and conduct are given in the dialect of the place and time, yet in their spirit are lasting. Of these Saint Mark gives in part a summary; and in Saint Matthew the words "provide not" convey the same idea as those in Saint Mark. They are told to go with what they have on. In Saint Mark the sandals are those commonly worn, and not the costly shoes which in Saint Matthew they are told not to get—a good example of the exactness of words in the gospels. Because Saint Matthew had so fully given it, Saint Mark gives little of the word to the twelve; but adds that they were to preach repentance, the touching and suggestive sending of them two and two, and that in healing they used not their superhuman gifts only, but also the anointing with oil—in their time a common mode of medical treatment.

Shelter and food were theirs of right, for "the workman is worthy of his meat;" but with the earnestness of purpose breathing in every word of our Lord they are told to go as they were—for God knows what things they need whom he sends on his errands; and the twelve were to provide no extra "coats or staves," no gold, silver, or brass, taking, as our Lord elsewhere said, "no anxious thought for the morrow."

"When ye enter a house salute it" puts courtesy side by side with self-forgetting, in the forefront of duty. This precept suits the formative character of the mission of the disciples, and is in exquisite harmony with the bearing and manner of Christ Jesus; for the grace of courtesy, like the virtue of chastity,



came into the world in perfection with him.\* A man unlettered and poorly clad, if he so have the Spirit of Christ as to be of ready kindness and unfearing self-respect, is a gentleman. Gentle, the root of the word, means of a good *gens* or family; and no Hapsburg, Romanoff, or Bonaparte is of so high a family as the family of Christ.

The Wisdom "who dwells with Prudence" commanded his missionaries not to rush from house to house, but to abide in one as a center of work. If a house were worthy, then peace was to come upon it; if not—though bitter their disappointment—their peace should return to them; and it would be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for the towns that received them not.

At great moments the oratory of great men sweeps beyond the time, the place, the thoughts of lesser men, but no such comparison really illustrates this word of the Lord. For him there were moments when the present and the future were one. And at last here the foresight is not the vision of a prophet. The tone is that of One "who inhabiteth eternity." The Lord ordains what he beholds.

He said, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves;" and, to the truth in this figure and the predictions which go with it, history has borne testimony when the witnesses to Christ have branded profitable vices, have smitten Pharisees with the sword

\* Many lines of thought are opened by courtesy as a Christian duty. With it go tranquil endurance, patient fortitude, meek content, and also a sense of rights becoming those to whom it is said, "Let no man despise thee." Much a Christian can bear, yet he is a child of Him who said, "Whosoever will deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven."

of the Spirit, have preached equality to nobles or the inviolable rights of conscience to persecutors, with warnings piercing the chambers of senates, the guarded walk of kings. Our Lord foretold for his witnesses the dungeon, the cross, the stake, and the cruelties that now torture the heart instead of the body. He said, "Ye shall be hated of all for my name's sake." He also said, "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved;" and with his warnings and revelations of the evil then present and of the evils to come he inbreathes courage and fortitude, saying, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known." And such the soul's need, it so craves for appreciation that were there no general judgment in the decrees of Heaven the strong cries of injured hearts would wrest from the mercy of God a public manifestation of his eternal justice!

Then in latent yet logical and close connection come the words, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword;" and elsewhere he said, "I kindle a fire in the earth." These are amazing words from the Prince of Peace! He takes upon himself strange consequences of his life in a way that recalls the words of Jehovah to Cyrus the Persian, "I create evil: I the Lord do all things."

And history testifies that to the guilty world *Christ Jesus did send a sword*. The empire disintegrated by Christianity was overrun and laid waste by the myriads of the North, the Vandal, the Goth, the Hun, the Franks, the Dane, the Norman. That judgment passed; and then, for six generations, Europe fought with Asia for the holy sepulcher. Then the frenzy baffled in the East drew the sword of persecution in the West. Then great wars came in the name of religion. Then came "the tumults of the people," moved by dim reminiscences of the life and teaching of the Son of man to demand liberty and equality. At the sacking of the Tuileries a band of workmen went from room to room plundering till they came to the chapel where there was an ivory-carved image of Christ on the cross. "Hats off!" their leader cried; "this is Jesus; he was a workman, one of us;" and, taking down the crucifix, in reverent procession they carried it across the Rue St. Honoré to the Church of Saint Roch. And—as if our Lord would light up the meaning and fix our thoughts upon his prophetic words—when France, England, and Sardinia, in alliance with the Turks, fought with Russia, the war grew out of a quarrel as to a star in the pavement of the Chapel of the Nativity at Bethlehem.

All wars seem to have some mysterious relation to the Lord. In the war that freed the slaves these well-known words were in the minds of many of our soldiers, hurrying through the summer night at the distant sound of the cannon on to Gettysburg:

"Our eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

He hath loosed the fateful lightnings of his terrible swift sword,

His truth is marching on!

"We have read a fiery gospel writ in rows of burnished steel,  
Let the hero born of woman crush the serpent with his heel,  
Since God is marching on!

"He hath sounded forth a trumpet that shall never call retreat,  
O, be swift, my soul, to answer him, be jubilant, my feet,  
Our God is marching on!"

The fire the Lord kindled burns yet. In spite of every effort to keep it under the flames burst out in new places. Europe is a camp where millions of soldiers answer to the roll-call; and soon the winds that sweep across the Atlantic may be burdened with the noise of warring nations moving with banners and music on their sounding way to fields as yet unknown to history. The heart of the world is troubled with wars and rumors of wars, the unending commotions, the wrath to come, which Isaiah in vision beholding said, "Unto us a child is born; and every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; his shall be with burning and fuel of fire." Perverted by the passions of men His truth changes into fire—like the electric element, which, noiseless and unseen, would pervade "the universal frame," but, finding no fitting media, rends its way in lightning and thunder.

Who would not shrink from preaching the truth, foreknowing the going forth of the sword to devour, and the fire to burn? Who would have lifted up his voice against the wrongs of the slaves could he have foreseen the faces of the dead at Shiloh or in the Wilderness? Who would proclaim the truth, foreknowing what is yet to come? In the multitudinous East will not the bands that now in quietness hold together a fifth part of the human race dissolve in

flame when touched by the fire? Yet the Lord is not the sword. The Lord is not the fire. The sword and the fire march before him. But when he himself shall "come in his own glory and in the glory of his Father," then "they shall not hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain."

The twelve, awe-struck as at the wonder-working gift, marveled at the word they could not comprehend!—at the prophetic solemn tone—the same which Andrew, Peter, James, and John were to hear again on the Mount of Olives! They knew not all, but they knew the spirit in which they were to meet suffering and danger in their Master's cause. They knew whence their help would come. That was shown, as plainly as their Master's love, in the words, "He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward;" a promise and a prophecy that will be fulfilled in the unknown day and hour when before the Son of man on the "throne of his glory" shall be gathered THE GENTILES.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE SETTING FORTH OF THE MISSION TO THE JEWS  
AND TO THE WORLD—THE MESSAGE OF JOHN.

IN the earlier part of his holy gospel Saint Matthew closely keeps to the line of this prophecy of Moses to Israel, "The Lord thy God will raise up *unto thee* a prophet *from the midst of thy brethren* like unto me." As far as the sending out of the twelve, he might almost have written as he did had the Messiah come only to the Jews. Yet there are signs that his coming was not for one people only. And in his Gospel Christ Jesus begins to unfold his mission to the world before the question whether the Jews would reject him is openly decided, and while the good-will of the common people who at first "heard him gladly" is only beginning to change. For a time trains of events overlapped—like the overlapping ravines, some of which, starting from the water-shed of Judea, run down steep and narrow to the Dead Sea, and some in the opposite direction widen out toward the Sea of the Nations. The threads were tangled in the web. No straight line could be drawn through those separating entanglements; yet so far as possible the evangelist keeps them distinct; and the better to do this, he brings in the word to the twelve before some earlier things that later are told.

In the third part of his gospel he traces an



unbroken line of ominous events, and side by side another line of continuous events which find their occasion in the former, and through which more and more outshines the glory of the Lord. Here, as everywhere in the gospels, each event so fastens thought upon itself as somewhat to obscure its relation to the whole. Yet the plan is traceable; and it becomes plain when at last the answer to the question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" brings out the fact that the Jews had rejected Christ; and the contracting and expanding, the darkening and brightening of its two contrasted, conflicting lines of events is lit up by the great light thrown back upon it all by the transfiguration.

On every side fibers of thought and feeling reach out from the third part of Saint Matthew's manifold yet close-knit argument and bind its chapters to the whole of his evangel. All its many and various truths and facts are in harmony with its design; yet this does not shut out or interfere with or weaken its clear presentation with special power of things of great interest and moment—one of which will be earnestly considered hereafter. With fitness to its plan it opens with the message from the Baptist. And that the way his Master felt and treated the question of John sank deep into Saint Matthew's heart is shown by his giving to it a whole chapter; and his tracing the influence of the Baptist's behavior shows his insight into the way that thought is born of thought, feeling of feeling.

Could John have sent the question, "Art thou he that should come?" if he beheld the descent of the Spirit and heard the voice from heaven? The

recording of this in the same gospel which records that John was the divinely chosen and appointed witness of the signs and wonders at the baptism is strong evidence of the truth of both records. And the question is too strange for invention. There was no motive for that. Every motive was against it. And though it be unexpected and almost unaccountable, yet those who say that the records are not consistent have not thoroughly considered the frailty of human nature, the character of the Baptist, the ways of the Holy Spirit.

The "spirit there is in man" looks into the dark labyrinths of his heart, or with thoughts swift as the thoughts of angels it "wanders through eternity," and then in a moment the clay so closes around the man that he becomes a doubt unto himself. Sometimes great men surprise and perplex by suddenly falling below the common mean. Aroused by the multitude, the theme, the occasion, the orator is great. Yet he is not a hero. He is unequal, inconsistent. Demosthenes was weak, so was Cicero, and so was the orator of Judea.

John "came neither eating nor drinking," and some think he was offended by the liberal bearing of Jesus toward "publicans and sinners." John was too much of a man for that; but his soul of fire was sorely tried by the delay of Jesus in openly proclaiming himself the Messiah. It was a grievous disappointment to one of his temperament. That insubordinate feeling may have grieved the Holy Spirit; and yet so natural was such a feeling that much the less we might wonder at his pitiable question could we trace the painful course of his thoughts, and day by

day watch the sinking of the captive in the horrible prison at Machærus.

John was of like temperament with the prophet Elijah, and there was an hour of weakness in Elijah's life almost as strange as that of John's. Just after the idol-crushing miracle on Mount Carmel Elijah gave up. He ran down far away into the desert of Sinai—for he must take a last look at its sacred everlasting hills—and there the overtaken prophet, strong, yet weak, laid down on the hot sands to die.

John could not bear confinement. Like Elijah, he was brought up in the freedom of the desert. His eloquence had quelled the Pharisees' pride and the Sadducees' scorn; but the gathering multitude comes no more. And the soul that braved a king fails at last. The soul that awed its nation and yet awes mankind wavered till the herald sent to his King the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"

These things may have had something to do with the message, and yet not be its full explanation. In the gospels the Baptist quotes from Isaiah only, which looks as if he had the writings of that prophet much in mind; so does the pointing of our Lord to his sixty-first chapter in the answer sent back; and the vivid colors in which Isaiah painted the glories of the Messiah's reign must have fired the hope and the imagination of a soul like John's.

John sent his message because he heard of the young man called back from death at Nain. That looks as if it were not a message of despair, but rather of hopeful inquiry. It looks as if it were a sign that doubt and darkness were disappearing in a gleam of

light, dubious perchance and dim, yet cheering in the dungeon. One of John's questions—*for there were two questions*—implies that, at least, Jesus was like the One who might yet come; and if in John's mind the stress of his inquiry lay on the possible coming of another, there is more excuse for his inquiry than at first appears, for

*"The Lord will come, but not the same  
As once in lowly form he came."*

Yet there was reproof in the answering of only one of John's two questions, and the strong Greek word in "Blessed is he whosoever is not *offended* in me" makes it certain that in his inquiry he sinned.

John's doubt was "a blow on the heart of Jesus from the hand of his best friend." \* It hurt the faith of those around him; and there was need of the reproof which in the first question to the people likened John to "a reed shaken by the wind." The second question, "Went ye out to see a man clothed in gorgeous apparel?" reminded all who had seen or heard of John of his nobler traits.

It is not common for those suddenly grieved and hurt by a man's weakness to own his greatness in the very instant of their suffering. Christ Jesus was pained at heart by the bad behavior of John, whose doubt was worse than another man's denial; yet even in that moment he did Christ-like justice to his erring friend in this magnificent eulogium: "Verily, I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."

\* Dr. C. F. Deems.

How much in Holy Scripture we pass unheeding! Often had I mused upon the question, Who was the greatest of the ancients? and never marked that the only competent Judge had settled it. He gave that rank to one unlike Cæsar or Alexander. His word needs no confirmation; yet here we may reverently recall that John was the greatest orator of his nation, the hold he had on the people though he wrought no miracle, his office the highest to which a man ever was called, and that of him alone *it is written*, "He fulfilled his course."

Strange indeed his message! So strange that there can be no reasonable doubt of the truth of its record. Truly it is self-authenticating, and so is the message from Christ. With what rightly may be taken as showing his insight into the mind of John he points to signs of himself given by Isaiah, and then he gives this sign—the greatest, for it is the last named—"To the poor the Gospel is preached." This is the imprint on the message of Christ's own seal; for who, save the blessed Saviour, would have given a higher place to the preaching of the Gospel to the poor than to the raising of the dead? And is it not possible that some happy effect of this unmistakable witness to our Lord, sent to John just before his death, may have been in the mind of the Spirit when he said, "John fulfilled his course?"

"He was greater than the greatest of the prophets, and yet the least in the kingdom was greater than he"—words that mark the breadth of the difference between the new and the old covenant! Then our Saviour, who never for a moment lost sight of his coming to save, instantly tells that "*now*,

from the days of the Baptist, the violent"—earnest, resolute souls—"take the kingdom of heaven by force." He then rebukes the evil generation which had condemned both John and himself on frivolous contradictory pretexts. He upbraids and threatens impenitent Chorazin and Bethsaida, and then—so naturally—his heart turns to the humble few who trusted and loved him, and, in words still showing the influence of John's weakness, traceable throughout the chapter, he thankfully acquiesces in the counsel of "the Father, Lord of heaven and earth, who hides truth from the wise and reveals it unto babes." And saying, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, and unto him the Father hath delivered all things," he beseeches all "the weary and heavy laden" to come and find rest in himself. What amazing contrasts! The consciousness of divinity, the quick invitation, the majesty, the kindness! True image of the invisible God—whosoever hath seen the Son hath seen the Father!



## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE CONFLICT WITH PHARISAISM.

IN a way most admirable in a purely literary point of view Saint Matthew at first brings in Pharisees. He says nothing about them. They do nothing, but a prophet seeing them coming cries out, "O generation of vipers!" The bad idea we then get of the Pharisees we never get rid of, and Saint Matthew meant we never should. He darkens his opening with their silent, motionless forms, and shows them no more personally—though in the Sermon on the Mount their teaching is condemned—till long afterward, in the second of those two chapters which bring in all the persons Christ met with in Galilee. And there they do not come in force nor speak openly. Christ then reproved "*certain of the scribes*," and, answering *to their thoughts*, "he saith to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house," "that they might know that the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins;" and "the man arose and departed to his house." Then with characteristic reticence, implying the little or no good effect of the miracle on the scribes, Saint Matthew says, "But when *the multitudes saw it, they* marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men."

"At a feast" the Pharisees cavil because "publicans came and *sat* down" with Jesus and his

disciples, and he rebukes them in words of Scripture—again quoted at another place and time—which *set forth the whole spirit of the conflict between the Christ and the Pharisees*, saying, “Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” The evil spirit of the Pharisees was fully disclosed by this charge against Jesus, “He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils;” but it did not comport with Saint Matthew’s design in his eighth and ninth chapters, there to give our Lord’s reply, and he reserved it for his twelfth chapter, which fully enters upon the great conflict of true and false religion, of Christ Jesus with Pharisaism. To *represent* that conflict is a leading aim in the third part of his holy gospel. *And it much concerns us to understand what is therein revealed. For still the great conflict between Pharisaism and Christianity is every-where going on.*

The eleventh chapter is admirable preparation for the twelfth. As intimated in the opening of the latter, they are closely connected, though in the eleventh our Lord’s reproof of “the evil generation” is of a general kind, and in the twelfth every thing is concentrated on the war the Pharisees wage against Christ. Questioned as to the behavior of disciples who had plucked and eaten corn on the Sabbath-day, he defends them by quoting from the book of Samuel, and for a second time he recalls these words of the prophet Hosea, saying, “If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.” The synagogue was the scene of a farther conflict. The Pharisees, divining that the Saviour would help the man with

a withered hand, asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? that they might accuse him." Our Lord "looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts," saying, "If any of you have one sheep, and it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?" And to the man he said, "Stretch forth thine hand. Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him." Jesus knew it. He withdrew himself; "great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all."

In the charge Jesus then gave to the people that they should not make him known Saint Matthew finds a fulfilling of this prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold my servant, my Beloved, he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed shall he not break and smoking flax shall he not quench;" \* and his quotation suits one of his general purposes, for it ends thus: "*And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.*"

Again the irrepressible conflict is resumed, and then Saint Matthew gives the answer of Christ to a charge stated before in chapter ix. One possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, was healed. "All the people said, Is not this the Son of David? But the Pharisees said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils. Jesus knew their thoughts;" and the defense of himself and what he before had said in the chapter is of the force of a continuous argument. He tells the Pharisees, with

\* Only in Saint Matthew's gospel are found the words, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (chap. xi, 29).

whom the law was contra-natural, that the law is so conformed to the constitution divinely given to man that the Sabbath is not broken by works of necessity or mercy, for "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Against the charge that he cast out devils through the prince of the devils, Christ said, "If Satan is divided against himself, how then can his kingdom stand?" The contrast between himself and Satan in the figure of the strong man whose house is spoiled was the more striking from the kingly bearing of the Prince of the house of David, the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and what he then said was of greater force and meaning to those who heard it than to this Sadducean generation.

The law that assaults upon the truth develop it is there manifest; for the accusation brings out this revelation of the Holy Spirit: "*He that is not with me is against me: Wherefore* I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men."

In the wording—*italicized*—the idea of some intimate relation between the Spirit and the Word appears. It is a fact disclosed in the first of Genesis and never lost sight of in the Bible; but of it no perfect expression can be given in words, for no perfect conception can be formed of their inseparable union, which approaches toward yet is not the identity of the two. Little is said of the Holy Ghost in the three earlier gospels, yet their few words accord with the revelation of his being, office, and glory in our Lord's farewell when on the eve of his trial and death he said, "Because they believe not on me, he shall

convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come."

The Holy Ghost is omnipresent. It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive of all the manifold wisdom of his many and varied ways of working. He wins his way in sorrows and in joys, in "all that stirs this mortal frame," in voices of religion, in whisperings of conscience, in teachings of Providence, in the memory of the dead. Yet, "He cometh not with observation." There is no sound of his footsteps. Of him especially it seems to have been *written*, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." And great our need of this warning: "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

*Some* of the scribes and Pharisees said, "Master, we would see a sign from thee," which rather looks as if they were a little better than the others; but Saint Luke says they sought a sign *tempting* him, and Jesus reproved them, saying, "An evil generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas"—words that veil a prediction of their judgment and condemnation and of his own death and resurrection. Just then our Saviour seems to have mentally contrasted the bitter hate of his enemies with the love of those he blessed on the mount, for some one in the crowd calling out, "Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee," "he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the

will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Thus as the darkness of his coming rejection darkens the scene it is illuminated by a flash of feeling which reveals that Christ Jesus loved his true disciples *as truly* as he loved his mother and his brethren.

Saint Matthew's exposition of the conflict of Christ with Pharisaism is continuous, but not the facts the inspired evangelist was led to select for it. Saint Luke says the first conflict was on what was called "a second Sabbath," the next on "another Sabbath;" and most comments put a wide interval between the second and third of the selected facts. Saint Luke also states that on the same day with the last "a certain Pharisee" besought him to dine with him. At the dinner "the scribes and Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: laying in wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him." Saint Matthew passed over things then said to the Pharisees, and brought them in when they were repeated on a far greater occasion and with greater power in the last words of Christ to the Jews.\*

In Saint Matthew's exposition of the conflict of Christ with Pharisaism miracles are not prominent.

\*The passage in Saint Luke proves our Lord's habit of repeating. There, unto the company of his followers, "first of all," he repeats a few of the words said to the twelve when they were sent forth. To "the innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trod one upon another," he repeated some things he had said in the Sermon. To most of them they were new, and were as much needed by them as by those who first heard them. In all of such repetitions there was a fitness of place and circumstance, and such slight variations in words, and in forms of words, as would be natural.



Thought there seizes upon *the words* of our Lord ; for he met the repeated outbreaks of the fierce and evil spirit of Pharisaism not so much by works of mercy as by Scripture, by reasoning, and by prophecy. And—if the illustration be a lawful one—he met them in a spirit of which there may be a semblance in the regal dignity awakened in lowly hearts and souls of gentlest elements by the blow of scorn, when in a higher tone and manner than before Jesus said, “In this place there is one greater than the temple ;” “the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.” And here, as in the close of his word to the twelve, especially we feel his true divinity, to prove which for our salvation Saint Matthew wrote his holy gospel.

If we look upon the contrast and conflict of true and false religion, to which Saint Matthew gave so much of his gospel, *as a thing of the past* we lose a great lesson which the evangelist was set to teach. Without some knowledge of the contrast and conflict of Christianity and Pharisaism, that ever has gone on, which still goes on, the past and the present of Christianity is a riddle, piety itself is apt to become a doubt ; and yet Pharisaism so skillfully counterfeits Christianity that human eyes cannot see through all its deceit.

The old Pharisee loved to make money, and made it in hard ways. But he was scarcely chargeable with gross immoralities. He paid tithes ; kept the Sabbath ; kept ordinances and times. He gave alms ; he prayed openly and long. These facts are taken from the gospels ; and had not the old Pharisee come into direct comparison and conflict with Christ Jesus he might still challenge the plaudits of men

as triumphantly as he did those of his admiring countrymen. While the heathen bowed down before the visible and perishing images their own hands had made, standing erect he prayed to the invisible, eternal God. While other peoples were sinking into willing vassals of Rome he mourned for the liberties of Israel. His ritualism commends him to the ritualist, his correct deportment to the moralist, his patriotism to the patriot. Hillel, the wise teacher, was a Pharisee. So was the eloquent Gamaliel, whose principle of toleration, now embodied in the Christian Scriptures, should have prevented the unchristian persecutions that have fallen upon his own people. And many of the Pharisees on hearing the preaching of the apostles believed in Jesus. Why, then, did the Pharisees from the first, and so persistently, hate Christ Jesus? And why did Christ Jesus so earnestly denounce the Pharisees? Some of the historic reasons for the course of the Pharisees, touched upon elsewhere, lie on the surface; but still these are difficult questions.

Much has been said of the fitness of the time of Christ's coming, yet little or nothing has been thought of *a fitness in the place* which this question, Where was it most desirable that the Son of God should be manifest? brings to light. To this the reply is, Wherever and whenever that form of religion prevailed of whose true character and worth it is at once most needful and most difficult rightly to judge. No heathen religions answer to this requirement. They are too insufficient, immoral, and false. And is it not equally plain that the Pharisaism of Judea was the religion whose character and teaching it was

most desirable should be tested by direct comparison and contrast with the life and teaching of the Son of God?

I do not hope for full success in searching into the nature of Pharisaism. Yet one of its springs is a universal social factor. In lieu of a better name I call it *Exclusiveness*, and, without attempting fully to analyze or describe it, shall speak of it generally, and then of its manifestation in the Pharisees.

As the Spaniard crosses the air-drawn line that marks off old Spain from despised Portugal the blue skies above the horizon-bounded plain are as heavenly, but the feelings of the proud Castilian are changed; and so in the social world sympathy is changed to dislike by lines of air. Religion, politics, refinement, or poverty create classes that hate or despise those not within their own circle. Its ever-changing lines no map lays down. To-day they exclude those they may include to-morrow; yet all outside their magic lines are aliens to those within. And though exclusiveness usually looks with indifference or contempt on those it bars out, yet when the despised are feared hate follows; and class lines so limit and destroy the natural sympathies that the hate which goes beyond them is unmitigated. The chivalry of France had no mercy on the defeated Jacquerie, and in their turn the French noblesse fared no better.

Exclusiveness is a characteristic of aristocrats and of savages. In the *castes* of India its force is almost beyond belief. With the Moslem it consecrates the sword. In Christendom it so contracts and hardens the heart that fearful are the providential means that

limit and control it—the scattering ruin that breaks up families; the fires, the floods that call out sympathy; civil wars that plow down ridges, and wars that make nations respect each other.

No far-descended peer ever felt more complacency in his ancient creation and in his sovereign's favor than did the Pharisee of old in his indisputable claim and title to the *partiality* of the Most High. Compared with his, the exclusiveness of nobles in their pride of place, or unhumbled in their fall from high estate, is liberal humility. The Pharisees were the aristocrats of two worlds.

Right and wrong are no more changeable into each other, or to be weighed against each other, than light and darkness, their symbols in the natural world. All those who say that right and wrong are interchangeable deny the holiness of God, “with whom there is no variableness or shadow of change,” who is righteous in all his ways, holy in all his works. He never offers or allows evil means for the overcoming of evil. In trying to do away with wrong man is never to break down right. He is to wait until the means are as holy as the end. And yet the Pharisees accepted the counsel of Caiaphas, a Sadducee, that one man should die for the people. With them the end justified the means. The Pharisees were persuaded that if it were the will of God—and they doubted not, they knew it—that a thing should be done, any means of doing it must please him. The whisperings of their hearts of any way to their own selfish desires seemed heavenly voices. Whatever they did for passion's sake, for pleasure, or for profit, they did for God.

Satan tempted them "in the form of an angel of light."

When our Lord said to the Pharisees, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," he pointed to their merciless spirit as the inmost cause of their wickedness. He revealed that with God a merciful heart is more than any thing else. And still keeping the thought, for "*sacrifice*" reading *works*, it may be said they are acceptable sacrifices when their source is the mercy whose soul is love.

On close investigation many things that are taken for good works have not that character in all respects and in all their results. The hearts of some of those so favored with youth and health and wealth as to be almost free from physical evils are so shriveled up and selfish, so burn with conceit, are so corrupt and so hardened with pride, that it goes some ways to prove that, could Science reach the goal of its desire and effort and banish physical evil, the results might not be wholly acceptable unto Him who "will have mercy, and not sacrifice."

The time was in Christendom when many works were taken for good works that were wrought in a merciless spirit. The scourge, the fatal pilgrimage, crusades, and persecutions were offered unto Him who "will have mercy, and not sacrifice." There were good works in the ages misnamed Ages of Faith; but the spirit of those times was hard; and the unchristian faith in which many of their good works were wrought lasted long. Pizarro and Cortez conquered and converted Mexico and Peru, strong through faith, if that deserves the name of faith which had no mercy.

In the creation the wisdom of God was known to the angels; his justice when Satan fell like lightning from heaven; but the angels could not then have fully conceived of the divine tenderness which breathes in the words, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," and the full revelation of which the Son of God "finished" on the cross. In the Old Testament the wrath of God so burns against sin that some will not receive what there is revealed of "his loving-kindness and tender mercy." To them his character there seems irreconcilable with that of his Son in the New Testament. Yet as the ideal of man Homer drew the portrait of a hero with the tenderness of a woman. The spirit of Achilles, fairest of the Greeks in face and form, burned as hotly in friendship as in war. He loved Patroclus as David loved Jonathan. Fierce the outbreak of his righteous anger against Agamemnon, King of Men; and then he wept by the shore till his goddess-mother heard his lament in her ocean-hall. At the call of his country he came to certain death at Ilium. He gave up glory at the call of honor. Battles pass unheeded till his grief for Patroclus slain lifts him above the self-respect that was more to him than glory. His bright celestial armor, the swiftness of his horses, the terror that runs before him, are fitting things when the hero comes again to the war as a friend. Yet, pitying, he grants to old Father Priam the corpse of Hector. It is the same Achilles who comes to die at Troy and cries for his mother; who delights in battle and in music; avenges the death of Patroclus, and, calling to mind his own father, weeps with old Priam for his son! Unequaled combination of tenderness and fire! Sublime enough



for Alexander's envy, gentle enough for the tears of Hector's wife! Yet Achilles, both in ancient and modern days, has been a ruthless soldier—even to Horace,

"Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,"

only wrathful and inexorable. And as the lesser has been misunderstood is it strange that the greater has been? If in his ideal man the greatest genius of ancient time could so blend heroic fire and loving tenderness, may there not be in Him who made man in his own image energy beyond imagination, love beyond hope?

The Pharisee knows nothing of gratitude, of honor, of mercy, of love. On his sanctimonious face is the luster of the marble shining above a grave. Though he build the tombs of prophets when they provoke his envy no more, reverence he has none. The Pharisee still lives, as unscrupulous, as sanctimonious, as pitiless in his zeal, as coldly selfish as of old. Much that is Pharisaism passes for Christianity. Its attendant demon claims and receives much of the honors of Christianity.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE VEILING AND UNVEILING OF TRUTH IN PARABLES.

SAINT MATTHEW in the thirteenth chapter further describes the day to which he gave the twelfth chapter; and its full portraiture marks his thoughtful appreciation of decisive hours and turning-points in the life of the Lord. His thirteenth chapter answers to our expectation that the conflict told in the twelfth would have a marked influence on the course of events. On that same day the Pharisees of Galilee made up their minds to kill the Christ. And there was a strikingly significant change in our Lord's manner of teaching. He veils his truth in parables; and he unveils his kingdom.

Here, as in the case of the sermon, the word to the twelve, and the word on the Mount of Olives, Saint Matthew has been charged with setting forth what was said at different times as said at one time. But all the eight parables of that day look at and survey the same thing from different points of view. The first one, that of the sower, tells how men will hear the Gospel; those of the tares and the net, that the bad and the good will be suffered to live together in the kingdom till the end of all things. Two short ones—the pearl and the treasure—illustrate the worth of the kingdom; three other short ones reveal that from silent, secret, small beginnings mightily the kingdom would

grow.\* These closely related parables are an exposition of one subject, but, full as it is of meaning, the exposition is brief. Two or three of the eight parables are not much longer than some proverbial sayings, and common sense makes light of the charge against the truthfulness of the evangelist. As well it might be said that Abraham Lincoln could not possibly have said in one day three or four pithy, pointed, clear sayings, and have told three or four of those short stories that unveiled or veiled his mind.

In the first parable the sower is Christ himself. It was spoken from the boat in the hearing of the multitude on the shore; and then the crowd, seeing a caravan on its way from Palmyra, or soldiers on their march, or seeking shelter from the noon-tide sun, melts away. Jesus, left with the disciples alone, explains the parable and adds two others. Then the multitude which in the meanwhile has gathered again is sent away; and in Peter's house the Master explains to his disciples the second parable, and adds short ones that need no explanation.†

Writing out of his own heart and memory, Saint Matthew thoughtfully tells how the unexpected and

\* The parable of the seed secretly growing, "man knoweth not how"—the blade, the ear, and the full corn—is only in Saint Mark (iv, 26-29). It is a beautiful parable; but the truth there taught is in the parables given by Saint Matthew.

† "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; . . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.' This quotation from the Seventy-eighth Psalm diverges both from the Hebrew original and from the Septuagint version. Saint Matthew has consciously adapted the words so as to express the absolute originality of the teaching in which he found their fulfillment."—*Bruce*.

sudden change in their Master's manner of teaching surprised the disciples. They seized the earliest opportunity to ask its reasons, and he answered and said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore, speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; neither do they understand. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." In thus giving, partly in words of a prophet and partly in his own words, the unteachableness of the many as his reason for trying to reach only the teachable few, our Lord begins with a dark saying: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." This is startling and strange! But in nature, if any thing be dark, quietly for light we wait; in Scripture, if any thing seems to conflict with our ideas of right, we should give up those ideas or suspend our judgment, for either our thoughts are not what they should be, or we do not understand the oracle. And on reflection the law laid down by our Lord is seen to be a statement of what often has its origin and conditions in human causes. Those two great classes, the rich and the poor, are largely the creation of forces working on a grand scale and from a long past time, as when one race has enslaved another; and so distinctions and inequalities may have an origin so far off, and

their causes be so mighty, that those who suffer from them think of and endure them as their destiny, though their sources can be traced to the will of man. Besides this, differences in the lot of men, sometimes spoken of as their fate, often are of a person's own making. The fact is a familiar one that a man who has because of his strong will to have goes on to have more. In the kingdom of this world, as in the kingdom of grace, "the violent take by force"—not that property is seized lawlessly, but that the good business habits formed because of the earnest purpose, and the money so gained, help on to farther acquisitions, while laziness and weakness lead on to loss; and so the rich grow richer and the poor become poorer.

In the kingdom of this world strong desire and effort enlist co-operative sympathy, and, commonly speaking, a man gets what he tries for with all his might. Sometimes the love of ease, pleasure, luxury, is the ruling passion of those who seem to live only for money, and who, to superficial observers, are disappointed men, though they really have what most they covet. When all secret things are known it may be found that those who have lived for pleasure, avarice, ambition—the most of them—have enjoyed their favorite phantom, have had what to them was "their reward." Yet the wish of a man's heart may come into unequal conflict with "the unknown combinations of infinite power," or his hope be doomed, so that, with his self-reliance broken down, he may learn that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But the inscrutable designs which baffle human forethought and effort never hinder the free course of the soul that seeks for God. In his own

kingdom the law stated by our Lord is full of encouragement. It is only a general assurance to those who seek the things of this world ; it is an absolute assurance for those who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. For the desire to be holy never runs counter to the divine will. The opposite of this truth, though sometimes tortured from the Scriptures, is malignant heresy.

When our Saviour said, "To him that hath shall be given," he was not speaking of differences of God's making ; he was giving this reason for teaching in parables, that the multitudes had closed their hearts to the truth. To them no more could be given. To the open hearts of his disciples it could be given. And the law that to him that hath more shall be given is almost a universal law. With the multiplication-table the future mathematician begins, and whosoever will not master its primary combinations cannot learn the science of numbers. Yet converts should not try to read before they know their letters. Growth in spiritual wisdom much depends on growth in holiness. The heart not fitted for it is apt to form conceptions of truth that result in dangerous errors. For some unquiet souls it were best to put off, for this life, all searching into some of those great but difficult things which it is not in the power of words to define, which no mind pictures to itself without some mist or shading of error, lest their curiosity be visited with heresy or unbelief or madness.

And yet the law that only to those who faithfully, diligently, wisely use their means of knowledge, that only to those who thus have, more shall be given, is an assurance that the soul may go on from truth to



truth, world without end. And the religion that grows not dies. No mockery of life is suffered long to endure. If the life of a religion is gone its shadow departs. Where now is the Church of Ephesus? where the Church of Sardis, to which the voice "like the sound of many waters" said, "Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die?"

And the life of each soul is growing or dying. If the heart wax gross, and the ear grow dull of hearing, the Holy Spirit speaks in parables. The youth who has felt a sacred pleasure in nature, in providence, and in the Bible, if ceasing to go on to know the Lord, grows dull of heart. The prophets cry to him in vain. To him the heavens lift up their voices in vain. It is the singing of the birds, the kindling of the spring to the dead in their graves.

There came a time when our Saviour spoke to some in parables that they might not understand. This seems strange and hard! But there are limits which even divine mercy will not pass, bounds it ought not to pass. And at times Christians feel that they reach a limit beyond which they may not rightly urge the truth—a feeling that is a shadow of its archetype in God, who reveals the secret of their guilt when he says to sinners, "*Ye will not* come to me that ye might have life!" and in saying, "I will let them alone," reveals that he does no violence to the human will.

After the great conflict and the change in the teaching Saint Matthew farther illustrates the evil of the time—ever in view in this part of his argument—by that visit of our Lord to his own village, when he said, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own

country and in his own house ;” \* and by such unfaith in those among whom he grew up that “he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” To the scenes of his youth the heart of our Lord was drawn ; for after the lawless brutality of his townsmen he went to them a second time ; and it may have been that the evangelist, while giving this glimpse of his affectionate disposition, was looking forward to the wonderful unveiling of his Master’s heart, when the sad tidings came of the awful tragedy which darkens his next chapter.

\* The changed behavior of the Nazarene is natural, for the Prophet’s fame had spread abroad. Natural, too, their profound reasoning, “Is not his mother called Mary, and his sisters, are they not all with us ?” Many comments hold that “by his own country” our Lord meant Judea ; but Saint Mark has the same phrase when speaking of Nazareth and the religion round about, including in it Cana, no doubt, where kinsfolk of Jesus lived.

## CHAPTER XV.

## OF THE MURDER OF THE FRIEND.

HAVE you ever mourned at the untimely grave of unhonored genius, when shades of night were darkening a landscape saddened with mists and clouds? As you grieved for your dead, so the Church grieves for John. Beholding the headless corpse of the Bridegroom's friend the afflicted spouse knows the bitterness of past ages, of the years to come. The last she heard of him was pitiable; this is awful! He was so strong, so weak, so loved in his weakness! For him she mourns as for no other! He was so near the Lord, yet so far off—the King's herald murdered before the kingdom came! He could not "look steadfastly up into heaven and see Jesus standing on the right hand of God." He was neither of the past nor of the present. He was neither of the prophets nor of the apostles. He stood between the ages alone.

Disciples of John came and told Jesus that a lewd woman and a wicked king had murdered his friend. He said not a word. Much he then had to do, and, that done, he sent his disciples away. He sent the multitude away. The Lord Jesus would be alone. He goes by himself. And a strange thing takes place when he comes down from his solitary night-watch on a mountain.

In what is told of Jesus in the gospels there is nothing that at all resembles the legends of magicians

told, save his walking on the sea. Yet in the veins of the writers of the gospels the hot blood of Asia ran; the wild, luxuriant dreams of their Arabian kinsmen have *entertained* all colder climes; and had they not stated the truth in its simplicity their Oriental imaginations would have mocked at the soberness of reason. But in all their writings only one fact is in the least suggestive of legendary lore. In all the life of Christ nothing else is like what there was on the night of that memorable day; and yet on learning its occasion the supernatural of that night is natural.

Then a glimpse is given of how the Judge of the quick and the dead was moved by the murder of his friend—the murder his Church forever mourns. The agony of his grief, the righteous indignation of him to whom the martyrs cry, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt thou not judge and avenge our blood?” is felt when Jesus is so exalted in spirit that the water feels not his tread.

The awful tidings of the day and the portent of the night have here been brought together to bring out their relations to each other. Let us now go back and take up the things which occurred that day. It was the day of the only miracle told by all the four evangelists, the day the five thousand were fed. Jesus then sent away his disciples, which he never did at any other time. All the earlier evangelists mark the urgency of the sending. Their words are as strong as the Greek language could furnish: “Straightway he constrained them (*αναγκασεν*) to get into the ship and to go to the other side.” Of that they keep back the cause. Neither of them tells the secret. It was later when Saint John told how Satan then found a

favorable time to repeat the final temptation in the wilderness—how *on the day when Jesus heard of the murder of John* he stirred up the people to force upon Jesus the crown and sword of David.

Now, as it was a purpose of Saint Matthew's in the third part of his argument, through the course of ominous events from the mission of the twelve to the transfiguration, to bring out the adverse change then going on, his silence as to the people's design (stated by Saint John) was in keeping with his plan. It might have conveyed an idea of trust and loyalty in the people that would have obscured one of his lines of thought; and it might have given a wrong impression, for the people had no right idea of the Redeemer's character and mission; yet those could hardly have been his reasons, as a word or two could have exposed the nature of that quick and transient out-flash of selfish popular enthusiasm. Here Saint Mark and Saint Luke also take his course. And for their common silence there was a common reason. In the perils of the time before the great revolt of the Jews against the Romans, when as yet the Christians were not clearly distinguishable from the other Jews and their principles were not understood, it was not well to state the fact that ever any of the Jews had attempted to make Jesus their warrior-king. All that the earlier evangelists might prudently do was to mark how earnestly Jesus then hurried his disciples away from the multitude; but after the Romans had laid waste Jerusalem and Judea all could safely be told by Saint John.

All the disciples, save Judas Iscariot, were men of Galilee; one of them was of the sect or party of the

Zealots who brought on the war with the Romans ; and had they been suffered to remain they would have quickened the purpose of the excitable and excited Galileans.

It was a crisis in their lives. And at about that time there was a threefold crisis. For on the next day after the people were so aroused by the miraculous creation of the bread which fed the five thousand the Saviour preached the sermon in the synagogue at Capernaum, given only in the gospel of Saint John. He said, "I am the bread from heaven," and on hearing his words so many of his disciples "went back and walked no more with him" that Jesus said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Then almost immediately followed the plot of the emissaries sent down into Galilee by the Sanhedrin, with its marked effect on the popular mind and even on that of the twelve. Much of the two former of these associated trains of events Saint Matthew leaves to his colleague, Saint John ; but he finds in the last a decisive turning-point, recorded in his fifteenth chapter.

Their Master suddenly and sharply checked the ambition of his disciples when he hurried them away across the sea. They knew his will that they were neither to show nor to feel any sympathy with the purpose of the people. The hopes raised that day were crushed. In the bitterness of their disappointment "their hearts were so hardened that they considered not the miracle of the bread." In that mood the horror of the morning came back. The white faces of the men who came from the burial gave an awful reality to their tidings. The fate of John gave awful reality to the danger of their own Master. Their courage sank lower and lower. It grew more dark and gloomy



within and without. What might have befallen their Master they could not tell. They knew not where he was. "And the ship was in the midst of the sea tossed with waves."\* Then to his disheartened children—and not on account of their distress only, but because that on the morrow many would desert him—their Master so came and so put forth his power over the winds that not only they, but the boatmen also, "worshipped him, and said, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

All that troubled night Peter brooded over his old Master's murder with flashes of anger, yet in sorrowing despondency. Suddenly beholding Jesus on the sea, his helplessness left him; and when his Lord said, "Come," he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when the wind was boisterous he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried, "Lord, save me."

Goethe showed Eckermann a picture of Christ and Peter coming toward him at the moment when the apostle begins to sink in consequence of losing his faith. "This," he said, "is a most beautiful history, and one which I love better than any other. It expresses the noble doctrine that a man through faith and courage may come off victor in the most dangerous enterprises while he may be ruined by a momentary paroxysm of doubt."†

Such is the aspiration and the frailty of man! Quick as the change from life to death the change in Peter's

\* How passing strange that, seeing these words, some orthodox writers look upon the final miracle of that night as an accidental thing!

† With some doubt about here quoting this, I let it stand, as it is a fine illustration of how an incident in Scripture could strike the mind of a genius who, alive to the glory of almost every thing else, was almost dead to the glory of the gospels.

soul from faith to fright ! And how reasonable does faith in Christ appear when our Lord, as if unwilling to understand such weakness, said to Peter, “ Wherefore didst thou doubt ? ”

Our Saviour wrought the miracles of that day and night not in answer to the prayer of faith, but of his own motion. Touched with pity, he fed the fainting multitude. To his disciples in their trouble, self-moved, he came. So now to his children, frightened “ by reason of great winds that blow,” Christ Jesus comes “ walking on the sea,” and when “ he is taken into the ship, immediately the ship is at the land.”

## CHAPTER XVI.

PHARISEES FROM JERUSALEM SET THE GALILEANS  
AGAINST THE CHRIST.

WITH a wise caution Saint Matthew does not speak of the uprising of the people after the miracle of the five thousand. That and the sermon which followed he leaves to Saint John. And so he passes over the falling away of "*many*" of Christ's disciples at that time; yet forcibly and clearly he brings out the falling away of the people of Galilee at about that time. Without this his gospel would have given rise to historic questions whose answers would have been vague and doubtful conjectures, as seen in a glance at the state of things.

"Preaching the gospel of the kingdom," Jesus "came into Galilee." The common people, "astonished at his doctrine" and his miracles, questioned in their hearts whether he were not the Prince of the house of David who would make Zion like the Palatine Hill, the Jews the rulers of the world. With the imperial dreams of the people the disciples were in sympathy even after he had begun to check their ambition by privately unveiling the truth in his parables and telling them that his kingdom would grow from little beginnings. Such the expectation; and fast the work of Jesus goes on. His fame ever is growing. And why did not Antipas or the Romans stop him? I think the higher imperial officials looked to the

centurion they had stationed at Capernaum for information concerning Jesus; and that when those sagacious men were informed that the new prophet had attached a *publican* to his own person they had no fear of a man so free from the prejudices of his race and against whom those prejudices were sure to be aroused. Assuredly, their sentinel's report was a favorable one; and, placed there by Providence at the time, that sentinel may then have done more for Christianity than he did for Judaism when he built a synagogue.

Antipas was not the man his father was. He was not so watchful and quick as old King Herod. It was later when Pharisees warned Jesus that Antipas would kill him; and our Lord's then speaking of "that fox" looks as if Herod sent that warning to drive him out of his province lest his course should call down upon himself the censure of his Roman masters. Superstitious, like old Herod, Antipas cried out, "It is John risen from the dead;" yet old Herod was not stayed by poor murdered Mariamne's ghost from murdering her lovable children; and Antipas was bad enough for any thing. His father's blood was in his veins. But his murder of John had so enraged his people that he was afraid to do the like again; and in the providence of God the murder of John may have been a safeguard of the life of Jesus.

After that murder Jesus chose out-of-the-way places; yet multitudes gathered there. And on the day they were moved by the tidings of the fate of John the miracle of thousands fed so brought to mind their fathers' deliverance from Pharaoh's tyranny, the likeness in the present to the glory in the past so kindled

their hopes, that they would have made Jesus their king; and things were so shaping that he would have been in great peril from Herod and from the Romans *had not a great wave of hostile feeling toward Jesus suddenly swept from Jerusalem over the whole of Galilee.*

On his first "going up" to Jerusalem Jesus openly put forth his sovereignty over the temple with words never afterward forgotten, and brought up against him on his trial. Then "many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did;" but Jesus "did not commit himself unto them," because "he knew what was in man." He withdrew to the open country and there stayed till a trustworthy warning came of danger from Jerusalem. He chose to make Galilee the field of his ministry. From thence he went up to Jerusalem "to a feast of the Jews." He there healed a sufferer for "thirty and eight years." And because of that mercy on the Sabbath day "the Jews did persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him." "Jesus answered them (Ὁ πατήρ μου), My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."\*

Changes that are to change the world are usually

\* Though commenting on things other than those in Saint Matthew's gospel is not my purpose, yet here, as many have done, I would mark that Jesus then made a claim to the Fatherhood of God in a sense in which it was his only—Ὁ πατήρ μου, "Father of myself alone;" and would also mark the mental quickness and acuteness of the Jews, elsewhere pointed out. Instantly they drew the logical inference that it "made him equal with God;" and the clearness with which they all saw this is plain from their instant action.

unheeded for a time by those most affected by them in the end. For a time the hostility of Jerusalem blinded the ecclesiastics of the capital to their danger from the Reformer. Galilee was out of their jurisdiction, and they did not at once concern themselves with what Jesus was doing there. But sooner or later they must give heed to his growing power and fame in the great northern province. And neither too soon nor too late for consistency with a natural course of events there come down to Galilee those whom Saint Matthew briefly, yet in words of great significance, introduces as "*scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem.*"\* And, whether they were sent of its own motion by the Sanhedrin or came in answer to a call from the Pharisees of the province, they came with a well-considered and dangerous plan and purpose.

In the great conflict in chapter xv the Pharisees of the northern province charged Jesus, as the Jews in Jerusalem had done, with blasphemy and with breaking the Sabbath. Some of them may have been at "the feast" and have brought home tidings that had some connection with the course proposed and taken

\* Not long after the opening of our Lord's ministry in Capernaum there were in the synagogue as Jesus "was teaching, Pharisees and doctors of the law which were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea, and Jerusalem" (Luke v, 17). That might have been almost from the first, as the fame of the Prophet in Jerusalem and Judea, as well as in Galilee, was sudden and great; and here there is not the single naming of men from Jerusalem which there is in Saint Matthew (xv, 1). And that Saint Luke then meant to give a general view of the state of things is probable from the indefinite time-note, from the way the Galileans are first named, and is certain when, later on, verse 30, the charge made against Christ comes from scribes and Pharisees of Capernaum.



by the Pharisees of Galilee. But whether they acted of their own motion or not they were not able to carry out what they planned; and the plan and course of the emissaries from the capital were quite different.

There seems to be a hint of the presence of such at the sermon in the synagogue at Capernaum, and some may have come down in advance to spy out the land; but they do not allude to that sermon, though its disastrous effect upon the prophet's followers was in the line of their own purpose. They knew how much it favored them, and yet those strong men kept firmly and strictly to their own well-considered and decisive policy. They said not a word about blasphemy or Sabbath-breaking. Strange to tell, they only ask about some of the disciples of Christ having eaten bread with unwashed hands! Is not this unbefitting the gravity of the occasion? Is it not hard to believe that emissaries came down from Jerusalem in the name and clothed with the authority and moral influence of the all-powerful Sanhedrin *only to ask about that*? It looks so, till we find out how much to the point their seeming trifling was, how much it was meant to do, and *how much it did*.

The names of those who, in chancing not to wash their hands before they ate, transgressed what Saint Mark says was "the custom of all the Jews" are not given; and that their omission was an uncommon thing among the disciples is a sure and plain inference from the fact that they reeled under the shock of their Master's defense of it. It was an accidental thing that could not well have been otherwise, but it was seen by ever-watchful spies; and

the quick-witted lawyers from Jerusalem seized upon it. For them it was sufficient; and they made the whole controversy and conflict between the Sanhedrin and the Christ turn upon it.

Passing over the flowing salutations of Oriental courtesy, Saint Matthew gives the one question which, with a quick, comprehensive brevity characteristic of Eastern logicians at their best, opened and summed up the whole debate between the Hebrew Church and Christ Jesus. The Sanhedrin taught the Jews to believe that traditions (which in part were its own interpretations of Holy Writ and in part had no warrant from Scripture) were sacred, and of equal authority with the written law. And the emissaries they sent down into Galilee, being sure of the Prophet's answer beforehand, meant on that public and solemn occasion to force him, when examined by the representatives of the national council, openly to take ground where the people would not stand with him. Wherefore they put this question to Christ Jesus: "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread."

Unimportant, trifling as it now seems, for their purposes it was the best question they could have hit upon. It inquired as to a harmless usage, blameless in itself, and rather to be commended. Yet in it there was comprehended all that was at issue. Of that usage the Scriptures said nothing. It rested on tradition only. In all this the well-trained, well-selected, well-instructed lawyers of the Sanhedrin showed themselves much more astute than the Pharisees of the Province. The latter charged Jesus with

breaking a law of Moses as expounded by them. The abler ecclesiastics of the temple took a more thorough and a more politic course. Their question went deeper than the right or wrong of any one of their interpretations of Scripture. Simple as it was in form it was absolute in spirit. Essentially it asked Christ Jesus, Will you or will you not obey traditions accredited by the Church?

Our Lord would not obey. He took no stand for or against the custom. He does not say the custom is right or wrong. He rejects it as part of an ecclesiastical claim. He does not excuse or defend his disciples on the ground that the omission was accidental or unavoidable. He takes no notice of their inquiry in form. His answer goes to its spirit. The question was decisive; so was the answer. Without discriminating between their traditions, without trying to save any of them, he rejected them all, and laid down his law, irrevocable for all time, saying that "traditions of men are not to be put in the place of commandments of God."

The Eastern man lies prostrate at the feet of a custom, however meaningless, useless, ridiculous, or hurtful. The native troops in India, merely suspecting that the English meant they should break a trivial custom, broke out in mutiny. The war that followed shook the British Empire in the East. And the Western man can hardly believe, he cannot comprehend, the power of custom over Eastern men.

Those wily politicians from Jerusalem understood their people. They were sure beforehand of the answer Jesus would give, and they judged rightly of its effect. The blow they struck told; and, seeing this,

Christ Jesus instantly takes measures to arrest its consequences. He then did what *he never did at any other time*. At once he called to him the multitude and said, "Hear and understand." Saint Mark says, "When he had called *all the people*, he said unto them, Harken unto me *every one of you*, and understand." And is it not of great historic and religious interest and moment that, in defending his refusal to obey its traditions, *Christ Jesus our Lord appealed from the authority of a church to the reason of the people?*

Some of the disciples had given the immediate occasion for the form of the interrogatory of the Hebrew Church, but they all were troubled, were greatly troubled. Far from being enlightened and convinced by their Master's words, they could not understand, they could not receive them; and he was so deeply moved, so much in earnest, that they feared to ask him to explain what he had done. All they ventured to do was timidly to hint at the appalling fact that he had put himself in open opposition to the Church: "They came and said, *Knowest thou*"—as if he did not know!—"that the Pharisees were offended?" Their behavior shows they did not comprehend what their Master did when, at an earlier time, he sent forth the twelve in his own name. To the thoughts of their hearts their Master answered and said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone. They be blind leaders of the blind." His undaunted tone encouraged them. Before that, no one of them dared to say what was in all their minds; then, Peter, speaking for them all, asked him, saying,

"Declare unto us the *parable*," as he felicitously called it, thus delicately hinting that it was "a dark saying." Jesus said, "*Are ye also without understanding?*" And then his bewildered, anxious disciples were taught truth which now seems hardly needed by men of the European races; but the words, the wisdom of the Christ, reach to every zone. The truth he uttered then is needed now in China, India, and in all the heathen lands. And every-where it rebukes the asceticism which even yet has never ceased to lurk within the Church.

The way Christ Jesus began with saying to the disciples, "*Are ye also without understanding?*" ends all doubt that the emissaries of the Sanhedrin succeeded in changing the good-will of the people, since even the chosen of Christ were so mastered by their prejudices. And thus with precision, yet with brevity, Saint Matthew clearly pictures those darkened groups—the astute Pharisees, the slavish multitude (their presence felt rather than heard or seen), blind followers of the blind, the dull disciples, and through it all reveals in Jesus Christ more, far more, than even "the melancholy grandeur of insulted genius."

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON — THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN—THE RETURN—THE MIRACLE OF THE FOUR THOUSAND—THE CONCLAVE AT MAGDALA.

GREAT the change in the feelings of the Galileans, and Christ Jesus left Capernaum.\* After the conflict with the emissaries of the Sanhedrin he left the region round about the Sea of Galilee; and to the shore of the Mediterranean Sea he made, in haste, a solitary journey that was a startling contrast to his previous circuits in Galilee.

What their Master was about to do the bewildered disciples could not tell. They may have asked among themselves, as once did the Jews in Jerusalem, Will he go to the Gentiles? And Saint Matthew, who before has told of their perplexities, their dullness, and just before of their fear of what their Master had said and done, now makes known their state of mind through their behavior toward a Syrophenician woman. His portraiture of the scene, firm in outline, warm in color, is more graphic than even Saint Peter's; and it shows how he was struck with the manner of his Lord and with the plea of the woman.

From out of the heathen world the presence of our Lord was recognized at the beginning and toward the end of his life, in the "worship" of the Magi and in

\* He did not go back there to stay.



the prayer of the Syrophenician woman. To her, as to the soldier of Rome, our Lord might have said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And as the special training of the disciples to become apostles, seen in his teaching of them as he no longer taught the unteachable multitude, had close connection with his withdrawal from the lake and his afterward keeping the disciples more to himself than before, he may have unveiled to them the heart of that earnestly pleading heathen woman because so much of their lives was to be spent in Gentile lands, where her looks must often have come up before them; and he may have wished they should see in her the faith in himself that, dying out in Galilee, was troubled in them.

A heathen of the heathen (*ἑξελθοῦσα*), coming out of the lands of Tyre and Sidon, sought for the Christ, and though he had entered into a house, "and would have no man know it,"\* find him she would. For her "daughter, grievously vexed with a devil," she besought mercy; and, strange enough, she prayed to Jesus as the Son of David.

Soon afterward the disciples, taken through Sidon, gazed on the wonders of the Gentile world. This is merely named by Saint Mark. Saint Matthew passes it by. The reticence of the one and the silence of the other make the story of the Syrophenician woman the more significant. And her twice-told story is all that is told of the whole journey.

I think it was one of several purposes of our Lord

\* "He went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into a house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid." Mark vii, 14.

in that remarkable journey to test the feelings of the Gentiles.\* My opinion has before been given that our Lord tested the feeling of Judea and of Nazareth; yet here there is need more fully to consider the records on which it is based, where, as usual, the Gospel writers state facts without comment. Our Lord's coming away from Judea was consequent upon a warning of harm like what had come to John the Baptist, and, acting upon providential intimations of his duty, he fled in haste and began his public ministry in Galilee.

It would have better suited the tone of Saint Matthew's gospel had he instead of Saint Luke told of the rough behavior of the Nazarenes to Jesus on his first visit; but he had made known their bad character in the last verse of his second chapter. Saint Luke, who before had told that, as ruffians sometimes feel toward little children, the Nazarenes had felt the loveliness of the childhood and youth of Jesus, tells of the violence his townsmen would have done on his first visit; and so each of the two gospels marks that his lot was cast in, not with the poor only, but with the bad. Jesus grew up in a town where wickedness was unveneer'd with culture; yet from Saint Luke we learn that he wanted to preach first of all to the wicked town which was the place of his childhood, for many years his abode; and it looks as if he would have made it the center of his work in Galilee—if the strength of such a desire and purpose may be inferred from the sharpness of the intimation against it in treatment the like of which he met with in no other place

\* This conclusion was reached before I knew—and was glad to know—it was that of Saint Augustine.

in Galilee. Capernaum also was a wicked town; but he received an intimation that he was to go there in the coming from thence to Cana of the "nobleman," whose son, sick in Capernaum, Jesus there healed—"the second miracle that he did when he was come out of Judea."

In his testing of the feeling of the Gentiles the coming of the Syrophenician woman was a providential intimation. It was given before our Lord crossed the frontier. Of Phenician and of Greek lineage, the woman was to an uncommon degree a representative of the heathen world. All she said and did made her coming and conduct as plainly a providential intimation as the intimation that was given as to Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Capernaum. And the silence of the gospels as to our Lord's visit to Sidon may be taken as some evidence that he received it as a sign that the world was then ready for the Gospel.

But the historic question arises, How could that Syrophenician dweller in lands of Tyre and Sidon, who "fell at the feet" of Jesus, and "cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David," have known what she did? And the further question arises whether at that time the Gentile world was prepared to receive the Gospel. As to the latter, something was said in treating of the Sermon on the Mount, and here the two questions may be answered together. As to the former, there is the triple witness of Suetonius, of Tacitus, and of Josephus that, throughout the Orient, there was in that generation a wide-spread belief that ancient oracles foretold that some godlike ruler would rise up in

Judea;\* and as that expectation was wide-spread in the East it was sure to be wide-spread in the West, in the land of Tyre and Sidon. Therefore, as among the Jews, so among the heathen, the wonder-working Prophet was thought of as the predicted One; and it is not the knowledge, but the faith, of the Syro-phenician woman that is wonderful.

The disciples were deaf to the promise and prophecy, in her coming and conduct, of spiritual blessings for the Gentile world. They did not believe or wish that in the mercies of the Messiah's reign heathen "dogs" should equally share with Abraham's race; and though their Master answered the strange woman not a word, still they were dissatisfied, and they besought him to send her away. *For them* he said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." *To her* he answered, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." This is unusual. The words of the Saviour sound harsh and strange. But he was looking into her heart. He saw that she could stand his severe testing. There was some little encouragement for the poor mother in the word he used, the "little dogs," those of the household. When she would not give over he said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And the miracle was a great miracle. It was wrought from afar. Our Lord never spoke with or saw the daughter, but she was made whole from that very hour.

The feeling and purpose that have been ascribed to our Lord, though they have the countenance of

\* Two chapters in *The Wise Men*, on "Daniel and the Magi," and on "The Hope of the Messiah in the East," treat of this.

Saint Augustine, may be questioned because they are so very human, and because he found what he wished to find in the coming of the Syrophenician woman. Yet in these things there is a mine of instruction. The smallest signs from God are full of meaning. And when Jesus sought to test things in human ways the human and the superhuman were so blended as to be inextricable. The warning, showing Judea was not the place for his work, was so sudden and sharp that his disciples had no time to take bread with them, as usual in Eastern traveling, and he went through Samaria. Yet there, at Jacob's well, his glory was so apparent to a woman of more than doubtful character that she and those to whom she told of him believed that he was the Christ. The brutality of his townsmen makes it felt that he was indeed a man; and yet he was saved by divine power from a violent death, though the record of this is so reserved that many see not the miracle. And though the desire gratified by the sign from God in the coming and faith of the Syrophenician woman was so very human, yet what he did for that woman shows that in him the superhuman is no more separable from the human "than color from the rainbow or extension from matter."

With the prudence that was the instant cause of the flight from the lake country our Lord came back there through the coasts of heathen Decapolis by circuitous, unfamiliar ways, to the thinly peopled eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee. Yet there a multitude gathered, and the four thousand were fed. That miracle was so much like the miracle of the four thousand

that hypercritical heretics claim that blundering tradition made two miracles out of confused memories of one. Later on that their irreverent denial of the truth of Holy Scripture is both uncritical and unhistorical will be proved; but before that another notion of theirs must be set aside. On the day the four thousand were fed Christ Jesus prevented an insurrection by refusing to be made king. In consequence of this and of other causes working to the same end the enthusiastic fervor of the people so changed to hostile feeling that Jesus went away from the land of Genesaret; but when again he came into that region the people gathered again through curiosity and rekindling expectations; their cold hearts melted when for three days the maimed were healed, the lame made to walk, the dumb to speak, and "they glorified the God of Israel." Then Christ Jesus, seeing, as before, the need of sending away the excited multitude, said, "I have compassion on them because they continue with me now for three days and have nothing to eat, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way." Those words of blended pity and prudence, though in form addressed to the disciples, are in the tone of one considering and counseling with himself; for the disciples answered and said, "Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness as to fill so great a multitude?" Now, color-blind critics say that the disciples, having seen the five thousand fed, could not have doubted that their Master could do the like again. *That is true; but no doubt is expressed in what the disciples said, and none is implied.* We who have only the words of the Lord feel there was something in the



way of his doing what he wished to do. The disciples who had his tones, look, and manner felt this more, and they spoke to their Master as one naturally is spoken to whose mind hardly seems to be made up. In such cases, usually, there is only a semblance of decision. The Lord had decided; but to the disciples, who had never known a miracle to be wrought save on some good and pressing occasion, it seemed that their Master had not fully determined whether such was the occasion. Familiar with his ways, they thought they saw in his words and manner some lingering trace of deliberation. And the last great public miracle of Christ Jesus in the land of Galilee was wrought with an unusual deliberation in keeping with and explained by the circumstances.

Now, taking up the question whether there was only one miracle, it might be said that our Lord himself marks minute differences between the two miracles, that Saint Matthew and Saint Mark do the same; but as this is clear in the gospels, and frequently has been shown in comments, I do not dwell upon it. The point I make is this: the fact that, while the disciples' first confession was not accepted by the Lord, their second, later confession was such that he did accept it, *can be historically accounted for only by the miracle of the four thousand.*

At Capernaum the disciples were not on so high a spiritual plane as they were at Cesarea Philippi; and what occurred in the meanwhile that accounts for this change which is proved by their Master's acceptance of their later confession only? Was it the disheartening flight to a heathen country, that lonely journey with its only miracle wrought for a heathen

woman? Was it the coming back, not by roads thronged with grateful multitudes, but along unusual, unfrequented paths to the eastern shore? Was it the crossing over, not to Capernaum or to any city of Gennesaret, but to the coasts of a humble village in an out-of-the-way corner of that once favoring land? Was it the meeting at Magdala with a conclave from whose hostility their Master re-crossed the lake so hurriedly that the disciples forgot to take bread? On their flight along the eastern shore of the lake and the river at Bethsaida a blind man was cured; but, led out of the town, he was told not to go back there; and the disciples had often seen blindness cured. Possibly the uncommon use of means in that case, by contrast with the spontaneous, quick outworking of power in the two creative miracles, may have set them to thinking; but that is the most that can be said; and Saint Matthew passed over that miracle. Its secrecy was not encouraging. And if there was no miracle of the four thousand, if its record be only an inaccurate, traditionary reminiscence of that of the five thousand, then in the course of those events *there is nothing which can account historically* for the difference between the earlier confession which our Lord rejected and the later confession which our Lord accepted.

The faith of the twelve was strengthened by the miracle of the five thousand; for, on hearing the sermon immediately afterward preached in the synagogue at Capernaum, "many said, This is a hard saying," and from that time went back and walked no more with Jesus; then he said unto the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" and, in their name, Saint

Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

When at a later time the conclave at Magdala (whose occasion was the miracle of the four thousand) rejected the claim of the Christ on the ground of insufficient evidence, and the Lord Jesus fled to the north, on that same day he said to the twelve these words, closely connected with what was done at Magdala and with the general state of things: "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the scribes." And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread." Jesus perceived this, and said, "O ye of little faith! Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes see ye not? and having ears hear ye not? Do ye not yet *understand, neither remember* the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it to you not concerning bread?" Thus recalling minute particulars as to each of his two great creative miracles, he so sharply rebuked the dullness of his disciples that they awoke. And there is reason to think that (with whatever other motive) our blessed Lord wrought his last great miracle by the Sea of Galilee to help his disciples to make their acceptable confession at Cesarea Philippi.

Those Galileans at Magdala could read the signs of a tempest in red and lowering skies, but were as blind to the signs of a spiritual tempest as they were blind to the signs of the Christ in the words and works of Jesus. For a generation so wickedly blind there was

only the sign of the prophet Jonah. Its warning had been given before. At Magdala it was given to the Galileans for the last time. And in Galilee its latent prophecy was awfully fulfilled when the slaughter and the misery at Tarichea and at Gamala were only less than the slaughter and the misery in Jerusalem.

Much depended on that Galilean conclave near the obscure village of Magdala. The Lord Jesus was then on trial in Galilee, and his rejection by the great northern province prepared the way for his death in Jerusalem. Yet, had every Jew consented to his duty it would not have baffled the eternal purpose that an atonement should be made for the sin of the world. But instead of trying vainly to conjecture what then the course of events would have been, let us turn to the human side of the fatal hour at Magdala.

Men, pharisaical in spirit, delight to "tempt" the man of nobler nature with hateful insolence, and if such a man speaks at all to such mean souls he speaks in parables. The less is like in this to the greater; the servant is like his Lord. To those who came to Magdala with premeditated insult the Lord Jesus would only speak words meaningless to them. He would not do for those at Magdala what for their successors he has never done. How could he unveil the mystery of godliness to such a godless crew?

The coming back of the Christ and his great miracle of the four thousand brought on a crisis. Its exasperating effect upon the Pharisees and Sadducees of Galilee was like that of his return so near to the city as Bethany and the raising of Lazarus upon the

Pharisees and Sadducees in Jerusalem. The Pharisees of Galilee had before sought to kill the Christ; and whatever form the plot of the council at Magdala may have taken it was deadly and dangerous; for Jesus sailed from thence in haste. All these things stand out when he warns his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, of the Sadducees, and of the leaven of Herod. His warning was given to shield them from the evil influence of the council at Magdala and all the evil influences of that evil time. Yet they thought only of their forgetting of the loaves; and their Lord, sharply reproving them, so recalled his two creative miracles that, soon after, at Cesarea Philippi, fully and rightly they confessed his divinity. Yet, in the meanwhile, almost every thing else was against that confession. For with secrecy they were hurried northward toward the limit of the Holy Land, to Mount Hermon and the source of the Jordan. And, pausing here, let us look back and look around, surveying the time.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COUNTRY AND TIME—THE PEOPLE AND THE  
TWELVE.

THE fragmentary origin ascribed to the gospel of Saint Matthew by infidels, and by Neander and his followers (who, setting at naught the memory of the family of Christ, have done more than Strauss and others like him could do to bring the world to where Pilate stood when, in the presence of Him who is the Truth, he questioned the possible knowledge of truth), is disproved by the continuous consistency, the self-evidencing accuracy with which the complicate, peculiar features and much of the history of the time are naturally inwrought into Saint Matthew's argument in proof that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

It is far better to dwell on the spiritual in the holy gospels that make wise unto salvation than on the historical, and yet it also is well to know something of our Saviour's diverse and difficult relations to the jealousy of the Romans, the kingdoms of the hour, and the passions of the people. Too often has there been shown to doubt and unbelief only a dim shadow, a faint-limned outline of the historic Redeemer. In battling against such a phantom infidels have had such an advantage that it is a plain and urgent duty earnestly to study the historic and human characteristics of the Saviour's life. From such a study the



gain to the faith is great, for the superhuman in Christ Jesus is inseparable from the human.

When Saint Matthew's gospel begins the hot and sultry atmosphere is charged with electric fire. This is felt in King Herod's trouble when all Jerusalem is troubled with him, in his exceeding wrath that slew the children in Bethlehem and the coasts thereof, and in Saint Joseph's dread of the Herod who ruled after the old king died. The imprisonment and murder of the Baptist show from a Herod danger to Jesus in his manhood as real as in his youth. The thunder-clouds of the morning are piled along the midday horizon.

The danger of an insurrection (of which Saint Matthew could not safely speak) is felt when blind men crying to Jesus as the Son of David are hushed. It is felt when, after their accepted confession, the twelve are charged not to make it known that Jesus was the Christ, and when our Lord forbade the three to speak to the nine of what they beheld in the holy mount, saying, "*Tell the vision to no man*, till the Son of man be risen from the dead." And it is proved by his sending his disciples away in haste when the people would have made him their king.\*

When the people came in crowds the Prophet withdrew himself. After the evening of the first Sabbath in Capernaum, when "all the city" gathered "at the door" of Peter's house, rising up "a great while before day" he departed into a solitary place. After the cleansing of the leper was blazoned abroad he "would no more openly enter

\* As stated in strong terms by Saint Matthew, though prudence forbade his giving its reason.

into the city, but was without in desert places." For his course, no doubt, there were *several* reasons—dislike of applause, distrust of the feverish, selfish excitement of the people, the evils when great crowds continue long together—and of those reasons one predominated and then another. But the danger of an insurrection, from the Romans and from Herod, was ever present.

Some things lessened those dangers. The common people of Galilee felt that the Prophet was one of themselves, "the carpenter's son." He was kind, and he healed their sick. After a time there was a cooling of their hopes and their hearts changed; but there never was a time when the common people of Galilee would have betrayed Jesus to Herod or to the Romans.

When a country is oppressed by alien rulers—like Venice under the Austrians—its people learn the ways of spies and informers. They check their tongues. They are very quick to read the plans and purposes of their leaders. They have ready ways and means of watching over their safety.\* The Galileans keenly felt the murder of John. They knew the craft, the cruelty of Herod, the watchful jealousy of Tiberius, the emperor. They divined some of the Prophet's reasons for wishing no impolitic, premature publicity to be given to his course; and, though the blind would talk, the people readily caught the idea that for a time, as much as they could, they were to keep to themselves what the Prophet was doing and were not so to blazon it abroad as to set Herod or

\*The timely warning sent to Jesus which led to his leaving Judea is an example (John iv).

the Romans at work, or to bring about an uprising *too soon*.\*

For avoiding the peril of an insurrection the region round about the Sea of Galilee was peculiarly well fitted. At the widest the lake was only about twelve miles wide. The thinly peopled eastern shore had solitary places. The beautiful water was quiet and safe for most of the time, yet when storm-clouds gathered on Hermon and the two ridges of the Lebanon gusts of wind rushing down the upper valley of the Jordan swept suddenly and furiously over the sea. But at least four of the twelve were good seamen, who lived almost as much on that water as on the land; "and he spake to his disciples that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitudes, lest they should throng him; for he healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues." And these words may be taken as stating his usual course: "When Jesus saw great multitudes he gave commandment to depart unto the other side."

Yet the marvelous works of the Prophet would have caused an outbreak of the people had he not, as Saint Matthew diligently points out, prudently guarded against that danger. For even those few of the Jews, who hardly believed at all in the foretelling of a King whose kingdom would be to the ends of the

\* In the East men of different religions usually are of different races and have little to do with each other. In Turkey, Egypt, India, men of different religions dwell in the same neighborhood quite unconcerned about what is going on within the pale of other religions. These things help to explain Herod's ignorance of Jesus, and the almost inexplicable fact that in the crowds around the Prophet from far and near no Greeks are seen.

earth, then dwelt upon that ancient oracle with the persistent restlessness of the day of national ruin. And they all were quick to scrutinize all that appealed to their hopes. Rich men anxious about their property, patriots ready to sacrifice every thing for freedom, and the pious who prayed for a Saviour, all looked for the predicted One as they wished him to come. The Zealots looked for a warrior "with garments rolled in blood;" Simeon and Nathaniel for the Redeemer of the soul; but so few read the sacred promises and prophecies spiritually that the general tendency of the popular expectation was to drive the Jews into a war with Rome, which would have been a hopeless war. For the Jews, though warlike, were untrained; and before or since no army has surpassed the Roman army in discipline. It held every "pest of vantage." It garrisoned the cities. It made sure the passes of the mountains. Beacons were piled on the hills. Fortresses commanded the valleys. Horsemen swept the plains. The trumpet sounded and the cavalry was on the wing, the legion on its march. The world forgets not the siege of Jerusalem. Rome's imperial dominion died, but the Jew is a living witness to her martial fury.

The earthly glory of the Messiah's coming was the life-long dream of the Jew. Its hope was whispered in his mother's prayers, sung by the maidens of Israel at the water fountains. From that dream he has never awakened. Even now the poor old Jew drags his worn-out body to Jerusalem, that, buried in the sacred earth of the land of hope, he may arise in the last day to behold Messiah descending in glory on the Mount of Olives. And had Jesus at once

revealed himself with signs and wonders that could not have been mistaken the Jews would have owned him as the King in their dreams, and not as he was. Had they understood that he would have them forego the sweetness of revenge and share the honors and privileges of Abraham's children with the Gentiles they would have denounced him as a traitor to Israel. With a correct idea of the purposes of the Christ they would have killed him. With a wrong idea they would have risen up against Rome, and he would have seemed to have enkindled a fearful war through ambition—his words lost in the noise of battle, the sacred light around his head a circle of fire.

Jesus was not misled by the zeal of the multitude, the wishes of friends, the craft of his enemies, or the temptations of Satan. Often have the mistakes of reformers or of rulers led to their own ruin and the ruin of their people. Where a mistake would have been remediless Jesus made no mistake. His work of changing the religion of a warlike, excitable people, under the eyes of a jealous dominion encamped in the land and of an unscrupulous hostile priesthood, went on, and yet no cohort was set in motion, no disciple slain. And to statesmen, to men of action, we appeal from scholastic dreamers of legends to say whether in the course of Christ Jesus there was not prudence without timidity, boldness without rashness, wisdom without duplicity; and all the swiftness and success which the unselfishness, the spirituality, the holiness of his mission permitted?

Still difficult questions arise. It is surprising that Christ Jesus was not associated in the public mind with the song of the angels and the other signs

and wonders at his birth. And yet its reason is not far off. A generation had passed away since the Magi came, and, in a time crowded with startling events in rapid succession, their coming was almost forgotten. Most of the few to whom it was fully known, with the other wonders of the nativity, were dead. The few if any of the living were old. Some to whom those signs were cautiously confided feared that the Babe, of whom they heard no more, had perished with the babes of Bethlehem; and none of them could connect the Child who so long disappointed their hopes with a prophet out of Galilee and—of all places—“out of Nazareth!”

Still more surprising is the fact that Christ Jesus never for once appealed to the signs and wonders at his birth in confirmation of his character and mission. The reason—well worth the finding out—is not so much in the prudent wisdom of his course as in its perfect harmony with his purpose to prove and to establish forever the truth and fact that he was the Son of God, not by the witness of angels, not even by the precious witness of his blessed mother, but by what he was himself. This he so perfectly accomplished that in the name of all the holy apostles Saint John could say: “We beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father. That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life, declare we unto you. For the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show it unto you, that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifest unto us.”

There still is a difficult question as to the belief of



the disciples and the changes in their belief. The people, quickly impressed by truth, readily change. They are easily influenced by trusted guides who tamper with their prejudices. The Galileans, disappointed in the Prophet, were bewitched by the sacerdotal magic of his enemies. Public opinion, that vague, fugitive, inexplicable sentiment, powerful yet fickle, so changed toward Jesus that the people no longer thought he might be the Messiah. When he asked his disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" they answered, "Some say thou art John the Baptist, some say Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." This proves it true of the Galileans that Christ "came to his own and his own received him not;" but it does not take us by surprise. Their feeling and its changes, as in various ways disclosed by Saint Matthew, are natural; but what is told in the Evangeliad of the feeling of the disciples and of its changes is enigmatical and may seem to be contradictory—as seen in these three questions: Is not the time and manner of their call in the earlier gospel contradicted by their call in the last gospel? Is not their belief at that early day, as there stated, improbable? And, hardest of the three questions, is it not irreconcilable with almost all that is told of them afterward? These three questions would arise in the mind of a generation that is beginning to take an interest in historic criticism, even were they not pressed upon it by infidels who say they cannot be answered, and by heretics who do not wish to have them answered.

The first question, as to the time, may be dismissed with briefly saying that Saint John, going farther back than his brother evangelists, gives a call that

was made just after our Lord came back to northern Bethany from the wilderness—a call that was before the full opening of his public ministry, after John was thrown into prison. That initiative call could not have been the decisive call which, separating from parents, homes, and business bound the disciples to a life-long service. Any other idea would tend to give to the narrative a fabulous, legendary character; and common sense and common observation decide that the gospel record, taken as a whole, gives the natural way and manner of forming a band of disciples, a step at a time.

The second question, Was not their faith at Bethany, as stated in the last gospel, impossible at that early day? requires for its answer all that has been said of the pious in Israel who prayed for a Saviour from sin. At northern Bethany the five disciples of John were a band of brothers, all of one heart and mind; and a pious feeling, common to all the five comes out in the two to whom Jesus was pointed out as the Lamb of God, and a feeling also common to them all comes out when Nathaniel worshiped Jesus.

But the full answer to the second question is best given in the answer to the third, the most difficult and by far the most important one. For if their belief in Jesus, judged by Nathaniel's confession, be unlike what afterward appears in their words and conduct, it more than offsets all that has been said of the historic consistency of the holy evangelists. The inconsistency, if such there be, runs clear through the warp and woof of the gospels. But inasmuch as the problem it presents is purely a spiritual one, its

solution can only be taken on trust by those who cannot discern spiritual things.\*

Nathaniel, seeing in Jesus the Messiah, the King of Israel, worshiped him as the Son of God, and his worship was accepted of Jesus. Here, then, at the beginning, there is what there is not again till near the end. Here in this accepted confession, coming from the "pure" hearts of true converts in the first hours of their new experience, that is seen which is not seen again till long afterward at Cesarea Philippi. There our Lord accepted their confession as made with sufficiently intelligent comprehension and in all sincerity; and yet he had rejected their previous confession at Capernaum, after which sharp was the discipline and thorough the training before their confession satisfied the Lord.

Now, the disciples are far off. Outwardly in their lives there is much that is unlike that in the lives of any others; and yet *there are the same things in the experience and the life of every Christian that there were in their experience and in their lives. Essentially* all that Saint John records of the beginnings of the discipleship of the five can now be found in the beginning of the lives of all Christians. The Scriptures taught them of a Saviour from sin, "*of whom Moses in the law and of whom the prophets did write.*" The Scriptures taught them to believe in a Saviour as they do now, with but this difference—he then was

\*This is a telling example of the truth that merely literary and historic critics of the gospels are out of their depths. To the spiritual the halls of Scripture are full of light; but they are darkness and confusion to the unspiritual, who are like deaf and dumb critics of music, or like brutes sitting in judgment on human language.

a Saviour who was to come; now he is a Saviour who has come. And here it is to be remembered that to pious men and women of old Christ essentially was the same Christ that he is to Christians *now*. The Spirit of Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, is in their prayers. They are the prayers and songs of Christians now; and *essentially* there is no more difference between the faith of those five disciples at the springs of the Jordan and of the pious now than between the belief of Christians now on the earth and the belief of those in holy vision beheld in heaven, and heard saying, "Unto him that loved, us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever."

That John the Baptist so felt the sin of the people proves that he felt his own sins; and that the five disciples sought a Saviour from sin is proved by the Baptist's pointing out Jesus to Andrew and John as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Thus there is the same fact in what went before the finding of Jesus by those five disciples and in what goes before the finding of Jesus now; for the Church of God in Judea, *the living Church*, spake to them from the lips of John. And as resemblances to the experience of Christians now are seen in their experience before they found Jesus, so at once a resemblance to the conduct of Christians now is seen in their conduct afterward; for at once they go to make Jesus known to others—Andrew to his brother Simon, Philip to Nathaniel. And then the way and manner of Jesus was the same as now.

When Andrew and John asked him where he dwelt he answered the wish and prayer of their hearts to know him, saying, "Come and see." And he who now "stands and knocks at the door" goes himself and finds Nathaniel.

Christ Jesus's awakening in the souls of the five disciples of John at northern Bethany a true belief that he was "the Son of God" was a much greater miracle than any visible miracle—of which he had then wrought none. What he then did—and he *now* does the like—was a miracle above any of his visible miracles. And it is as great a mystery as any miracle. For creation is the incommunicable secret of the Creator. Man, a created being, has no faculty for conceiving of the creation of any thing; and as to the new birth of which Christ said, "Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," and of which *it is written*, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," Holy Scripture is silent and secret.

Saint John takes us with him only as far as where the Christ is. It was then about "*the tenth hour of the day.*" In his great old age the apostle remembers and notes the time, and could not have forgotten what passed while he then was with Jesus; yet all that he makes known, *and all that he could make known, is that he found Jesus.* That only, *that and no more*, is all that any one can *now* tell of his own awakening in the new life. More than that belongs to the unrevealed and the unrevealable. The wind bloweth, the sound thereof is heard, but we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; and so of every one who is born of the Spirit.

Thus, in that early time—so unlike the present time—and in those earliest hours of the discipleship of the five, the same things are found that are now found in the beginning of a new life in Christ Jesus. And, in the tracing out the likeness in the lives of the disciples afterward to the lives of Christians now, there is the full answer to the third question. Between Christ and Christians ever there is the sacred affiliation; yet the childlike gladness of early love, its brightness of hope, its undoubting, unfearing trust, the blessedness of the heart when first it knows the Lord, do not last in their first bloom and fragrance. The god of this world re-asserts his power. Converts drift back to what they loved before. With blind selfishness they seek favors for themselves, asking, like Peter, “What shall we have?” or asking favors for those who are a part of themselves; like Mother Salome praying that the highest honors might be given to her two sons. They are unwise even in what seems to them a righteous zeal, like John, to whom Christ said, “Ye know not what spirit ye are of.” No answer is vouchsafed to wishes such as those of Peter and Salome. Such prayers are not heard, and so the Christian pilgrim is troubled and perplexed. With the loss of *purity* of purpose the serenity of affectionate trust and clear “*open vision*” are lost. Love becomes less loving, faith less true. Of the disciples as a class, some who heard Christ “with joy” “fall away,” as Christ foretells in a parable. Some money-loving, Judas-like hypocrites sell him. But through the Saviour’s patient, long-suffering mercy, through the discipline of disappointments, sorrows and trials borne at times with hearts that



wonder or rebel, his real disciples grow more and more like to what in the beginning they took themselves to be and told others they were. Thus what occurred in those early days at the springs of the Jordan is constantly repeated now; and there are repeated now in each Christian pilgrim the earthly hopes, aspirations, and passions, and the consequent dullness of spiritual perception, that are afterward seen in the twelve disciples.

When once seen these things are plain; and if they have not been seen before it is because so little credence, or thought even, has been given to the belief of the true Israel of old in a Saviour from sin. Yet to that hope from oldest time they clung as the life of their soul's life. To the Saviour Abel prayed, and for that prayer Cain murdered him; in that faith Noah built his altar; to that faith Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, and John the Baptist testify. The evangelical in Israel knew that what is of the flesh is flesh, that *except a man be born again* he cannot be of the kingdom of God. This is true beyond all controversy, for with earnest surprise our Lord said to a scholar of the Jews, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" And what has been said is wonderfully illustrated when our risen Lord, showing the print of the nails and the wounded side to Thomas, said, "Be not faithless, but believing," and Thomas answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God;" for then "Jesus saith, Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they *who have not seen*"—*this is in the past tense*—"and have believed." And Jesus had just returned from being with those who

had never seen him before and yet who had believed in him!

When Galilean Pharisees charged their Master with blasphemy, in that he forgave sins, the twelve were unshaken; when they accused him of Sabbath-breaking they were unshaken; in their heart of hearts they believed that he was "Lord of the Sabbath day;" for he said, "I thank thee, O Father, for what thou hast hidden from the wise and hast revealed unto babes." He said to them in the storm on the sea, as he says now to his frightened disciples, "Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?" But on the other hand, in the synagogue of Capernaum, he said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," and many of his followers—as for the same cause so many since have done—"went back and walked no more with him;" yet in that hour of sifting the twelve said, as the faithful now say, "Lord, thou hast the words of eternal life." It was a truthful confession, but not a satisfactory one. Then came the emissaries from Jerusalem, and the disciples behaved so badly that their Master said, "Are ye also without understanding? Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind"—a reproof which shows that when before they said, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" their trust was not altogether what they had thought it. They journeyed to heathen lands, returned along ways before untrodden to the eastern shore, thence into the upper valley, and then, at last, at Cesarea Philippi is heard the acceptable confession, as now, at last, it is heard

from all true and faithful disciples, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" And yet after that the disciples had much to learn. Even after the Christ was risen from the dead he "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart." Even unto them, as unto us, the life-long warning of the Lord to WATCH AND PRAY!

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE ACCEPTED CONFESSION.

How real the naturalness, the greatness of what is told of the accepted confession, though unlike to any thing that could be imagined! Man-like the question, God-like the acceptance!

To establish a true faith in himself in the hearts of the twelve who best knew him Jesus had labored and waited and watched and prayed. His heart, human in its strength, yearned for human hearts responding in spirit and in truth to his own consciousness. From the people there was no such response. And after his disciples had long been with him he had put aside a confession they made. But now the hour is come! Along the well-woven cord unhindered flies the electric fire from heaven. The truth flashes from human lips. And with the confession of Saint Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the kingdom of our Lord begins.

Our Lord then said, "Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jonas,\* . . . thou art Peter, and upon this rock I

\* Why, at such a moment, did he join the names of the father and the son? He did not the like in the case of Philip or Nathanael or James or John. But he did the same at the northern Bethany when Andrew brought his brother Simon. That is told by Saint John i, 43 (see also xxi, 15-17), and is one of the undesigned coincidences in the gospel. In all this did not our gracious Lord, who wrought his first miracle at a marriage-feast, do honor to parental fidelity by then recalling the answered prayers of the pious father of both Simon and Andrew?

will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And here, in lieu of all other comment, I give the comment on those words of Saint Peter himself in his first general epistle to all Christians :

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, that the trial of your faith, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ : to whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Christ Jesus. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious : but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Our Lord also said these words to Saint Peter at Cesarea Philippi : "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

And these words (also given by Saint Matthew) our Lord at another time and place said to all of the disciples: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

I believe, and as I think on warrant of Holy Scripture, that those words were not said to the twelve as a spiritual aristocracy; that they were said to them as representing all disciples of the Lord Jesus, and that whatever of power and right is given to them, in those and similar words, is given to each and every disciple of Jesus, however poor, unlearned, or despised, without distinction of sex or rank, of color or of race; for Saint Peter was moved by the Holy Ghost to say in his first general epistle that the disciples of Jesus are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, a holy priesthood;" and Saint John in the beginning of his Revelation, making himself one with the disciples of Jesus, said to them all, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever. Amen."

Each man and woman is called of God to a life he would have them live, to a work he gives them to do, and to each one these things are intimated by his Spirit and in the course of his providence. Differ as much as they may in talents or in outward circumstances, however unlettered, humble, or poor, all are alike in that all are called of God, "who is no respecter of persons." And since this is so, the calling



of each one must be, and is, as holy as the calling of any other one.

The disciples whom Jesus kept near his own person were called to be his witnesses. To him their witness was given in the oral gospel, which enters into the written gospel; \* in the written gospel, in the Apocalypse, in the epistles, and in their preaching of Christ and him crucified to the congregations they called together; and, since their time, each congregation and each Christian is a living witness to their apostolic witness through the organic unity of all true believers whose faith in Jesus goes back historically to the apostles; and yet in all believers there is the witness of the Spirit so witnessing with their spirits that while the teaching of the apostles is a rule, and the true Christian character is conformed to the example and teaching of Jesus as made known in the Holy Scriptures, yet the faith of believers in Christ Jesus has the same source as that of the apostles. For the witness of the disciples to the Saviour and Lord of all establishes the truth and fact of his divinity only so far as it can be established by human testimony; and our Lord said to Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," and *it is written* that "no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost."

At Cesarea Philippi the disciples first declared their sufficient assurance of that truth; our Lord confirmed it, and then instantly declaring the purpose and end for which the Eternal Word came in form and being as man, he said that "he must go up to Jerusalem,

\* So that, as proved in *Thoughts*, the four gospels are the witness of all the holy apostles.

suffer many things of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed and raised again the third day." He never told that before. And this Saint Matthew thoughtfully and carefully marks by saying he "*began*" to do this "*from that time forth.*"

When a man attains his wish it is never just what he thought it would be. The disciples' gladness at their Lord's confirmation of their hope, their faith, and their knowledge was instantly saddened by the prospect that opened before them. Long those patient men had trodden the difficult paths that led to the high mount of vision, but no fair land smiled a welcome. Bleak hills were seen through the coming darkness; and then, in words fearfully true to human nature, Peter, rebuking his Master's giving himself up unto death, said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Ever thus some friend, advising, beseeching, commanding, is ever nigh the self-devoted one; but never was a refusal more firm than when the Saviour said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Then, foreseeing that temptations, the same in spirit though far less, would try his children, the Saviour said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Whoever, for the first time, marks that when Satan, sagaciously seizing the occasion, tempted our Saviour through a friend, counseling, entreating, forbidding his going to Calvary, and our Saviour on the instant, caring for others who would be tempted, said, "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" will be sure that those thought-arresting words, solemn as the tolling of a death-bell, weighing all things in a balance, were his, and will feel that they gain in force from what called them forth. And he should mark that Saint Luke tells they were spoken *to all*, and not to the twelve only; and that in Saint Mark's gospel the Redeemer calls the people that they may hear him foretelling of the sorrows and trials of his service, and saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Then came this promise: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." This may seem abruptly disconnected from what goes before; but thoughts underlie thoughts, and those words followed the presumption of Saint Peter which showed the need of enlarging his knowledge and strengthening his faith. The disciples then understood them only as a promise of some great good; but seven days after their meaning was made more clear to Peter, James, and John by THE TRANSFIGURATION.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE TRANSFIGURATION.

GOD waits not for the end of some great cycle of time before he visits the children of men. He is not far away. He is nigh to every one. To Columbus, in the weary years of baffled effort before he sailed with three small barks from the little port of Palos, he told in a vision of the night that "to him should be given the keys of the doors of the ocean;" \* and, touched by noble aspirations, God encourages, honors,

\* On the return of Columbus from his first voyage there was a fearful tempest. He was in great danger, and wrote to his sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, thus, concerning his feelings at that awful time: "It was a cause of infinite sorrow and trouble to think that, after having been illuminated from on high with faith and certainty to undertake this enterprise, after having victoriously achieved it, it should please the divine Majesty to defeat all by my death."

The "Last Will and Testament" of Columbus begins thus: "In the name of the most holy Trinity, who inspired me with the idea, and afterward made it perfectly clear to me that I could navigate and go to the Indies from Spain by traversing the ocean westwardly."

And on his fourth and last voyage, of a time of storms and sickness, in a letter to his sovereigns he said: "Wearied and sighing, I fell into a slumber, when I heard a piteous voice, saying to me, 'O fool, and slow to believe thy God, who is God of all! From the time of thy birth he has ever had thee under his peculiar care. Of the gates of the ocean sea, shut up with such mighty chains, he delivered to thee the keys.' I heard all as one almost dead, and had no power to reply to words so true save to weep for my errors. Whoever it was that spake to me finished by saying, 'Fear not! confide! All these tribulations are written in marble, and not without a cause.'"—See IRVING, *Life of Columbus*.

and rewards those who sail, Columbus-like, on unknown seas, believing. Faith is "evidence of things not seen;" yet in holy Mount Hermon the glory they had seen in Christ Jesus, by the eye of faith, was openly shown to Peter, James, and John.

To the broken walls where spirits seem to linger, or to the foot of the time-worn column, the pilgrims of the heart are drawn. Other days come back within the circle of the Colosseum. But what are all the arches, obelisks, or mausoleums that time and war have spared compared to a sight of the men they commemorate and mourn, to a sight of Cæsar hearkening to Cicero in the Roman Senate, or of Paul on the Hill of Mars, telling to Athenians of the resurrection of Jesus?

Peter, James, and John his brother saw and heard two "glorified" men who lived when Athens was not:

"When Tyber slept beneath the cypress gloom,  
And silence held the lonely woods of Rome."

To those three witnesses for us was given proof of immortality like that given to the spirit which, passing the returnless gate, is greeted by the living it wept as dead. To Peter, James, and John the "undiscovered country" was fully represented. The body of Moses was hidden away from Israel in its grave in a secret valley in the land of Moab. Elijah was carried bodily into the heavens in a chariot of fire. The one was of the increasing congregation whose graves will open when Jesus comes again, like the graves opened when Jesus died; the other had attained to that for which Saint Paul "pressed forward

to the mark of the prize, if by any means *he might attain* to the resurrection of the dead."

In the life of Jesus the marvelous predominated as little as might be. No full record of his miracles was permitted; and, for the most part, they were not of the most dazzling kind. The Old Testament would surpass the New in what fires the imagination, were it not for the revelations with which the New Testament ends. The transfiguration is the exception. It enthralls the imagination more than the ascension. Thought is not lost in wonder when the cloud receives our risen Lord out of sight, for it is foreseen that he will not tarry long. The ascension was not in the human life of Jesus; the transfiguration was. In the holy mount Peter, James, and John beheld the Lord, as hereafter every eye shall see him, and now the transfiguration is the shadow and emblem of his eternal glory.

Support and consolation are divinely given to heroes of faith, and in a like manner may it not have been given to the Author and Finisher of faith to commune with Moses and Elias on the "exodus" which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem?

Meditation on each of these things has its own reward; and yet the full significance of what in part was seen in the holy mount is not in any one of them, or in them all. The common name—transfiguration—for that mysterious wonder and sign is inadequate. It makes an incident cover the whole. The Scriptures authorize and require a name of far higher and wider meaning. For that, of which Peter, James, and John beheld all that mortal eyes might see, was not solely for the consolation of the man



Christ Jesus, nor for the encouragement and reward of the three disciples, nor to prove our immortality, nor to enkindle the imagination; *it was a coming of the Eternal Word, as the Son of Man, at the beginning of his spiritual, universal, everlasting kingdom,* whose chief seat of dominion is in the unseen world.

Entreating fair and full consideration of the evidence of this, I begin to prove it by the truth that when our Lord said, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" he enforced it by saying, "The Son of man shall come *in the glory of his Father with his angels*; and then he shall reward every man according to his works;" and, having revealed his coming in the end of time, thus went on: "Verily I say unto you, *There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death*, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." His words are thus given by Saint Luke: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, *when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels*. But I tell you of a truth, *there be some standing here*, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." That was not our Lord's last coming, "when every eye shall see him," for it *was not to be seen even by all of the twelve*. For the same reason the idea that those words point to his resurrection or to the Pentecost must be ruled out. And the time is again limited, for the twelve were told that the Son of man would come before they finished their circuit of the cities of Israel. That circuit was broken by the murder of John, and any limit thereof would have been reached before the

time of the crucifixion. And after they record our Lord's assurance of his near coming, Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke, who were not permitted to make any comments, say not a word as to any thing that took place in the week intervening; all three pass on to the transfiguration as they naturally would if they understood, and meant us to understand, that the transfiguration fulfilled the promise.

What is called the transfiguration was within the time-limit of the promise; it was witnessed by only three of the disciples; and though revealed but in part to them, yet what they did behold answers *to the two ways* in which our Lord spoke of it beforehand as a coming of the Son of man and a coming of his kingdom. What is commonly called the transfiguration fulfills *all* the conditions of his promise. There is nothing else that fulfills them. And Saint Peter said: "We followed not cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from the Father honor and glory, when we were with him in the holy mount." Now, what honor and glory, fairly and fully answering to the force of these words, did he then receive according to the common idea of the transfiguration, in which the change in the face and the clothes is so marked a feature? \* I would

\* What the evangelists tell of our Lord's raiment becoming "white and glistering," "white as the light," "exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them," often gives an impression which makes me quote Dr. Vincent's comment on μεταμορφώθη—the word of Saint Matthew, also of Saint Mark, and which, though not repeated by Saint Luke, is the leading word. "Μετά denotes *change*, and μορφή *form*." In New Testament Greek "the latter word is distinguished

not be understood to intimate that there is not more in the common idea; but there is nothing else in the common name. And Saint Peter, having said that the coming (*παρουσία*) of our Lord is no cunningly devised fable, so clearly intimates that there was a coming of the Lord in the holy mount that it is of like force and effect with a positive statement.

Let us now think of what is meant in Scripture by the coming of the Son of man. More or less correct pictures we may form of what lies beyond the skyline out of sight; of the mystery called life some things we conjecture, others we know; and so of "the coming of the Son of man." This phrase is of both literal and prophetic significance. It has manifold shades of meaning; it is used with stronger emphasis, greater breadth, at one time than another; yet it ever sets forth *what is essentially the same thing*; and its

from *σχήμα*, the changeable outward *fashion* (1 Cor. vii, 31): in a man, for instance, his gestures, clothes, words, acts. The *υπόψις* partakes of the *essence* of a thing, the *σχήμα* is an *accident* which may change, leaving the *form* unaffected. Why, then, is a compound of *μορφή* employed in this description of the transfigured Saviour, since the change described is a change in his outward appearance? Because a compound of *σχήμα*, expressing merely a change in the aspect of Christ's person and garments, would not express the deeper truth of the case, which is that the visible change gets its real character and meaning from that which is *essential* in our Lord—his divine nature. In truth, there is a deep and profound hint in the use of this word which easily escapes observation and which defies accurate definition. The profound and overwhelming impression upon the three disciples was due to something besides the shining of Christ's face and garments. There was in that vision a revelation of Deity breaking out in that glorified face and form which appealed to something deeper than sense and confirmed the words from heaven, '*This is my beloved Son.*'"

meaning will be completely fulfilled only in the last great day.

In searching for its essential meaning, the usual order of our thinking of things material and spiritual has to be reversed. Metaphysicians tell that knowledge of outward material things, which seems to come wholly through our senses, and even our mathematical knowledge, is preceded by, and depends upon, intuitions; that, for example, there could be no perception of the relations of numbers without the intuitive idea of unity. The visible ever comes from the invisible or spiritual. A finger is not moved but by the invisible volition of the invisible spirit. And all changes within the visible world so have their higher causes and their ultimate cause in the invisible, that if what is transpiring in the unseen were known, the things which are to come to pass within the visible world would be foreknown.

A "coming of the Son of man" is a somewhat figurative phrase; for how shall he *come* who in some true tense *is ever nigh*; yet of his last coming it is literally true, and it may be well never far to depart from its literal sense, as, for aught we know, it may always have something of that literal meaning.

There may be "a coming of the Son of man" to churches, nations, or ages. If the churches of Ephesus and Sardis did not repent he was to come to them. And there was a coming of the Son of man in the judgment of Jerusalem, of the Roman world, of the feudal age, and in the civil war in this nation.

"The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Shall be dissolved, and like the baseless fabric of a vision  
Leave not a rack behind:"—

as really from the dying the earth passes away; and so the warning to be ready for the judgment day, for "in an hour that we think not of the Son of man cometh," fits the "inevitable" hour of death, which, however looked or waited for, comes to each man and woman unexpectedly.

When the Son of man comes to a nation, or in the winding up of an age, a thrill of expectation runs before him. As in the forest strange sounds go before a storm, so unwonted tremblings in the frame of nature and strange fears in the soul of man forebode the approaching visitation, while in some Olivet a few prophetic watchers of the signs in the heavens foresee the terrors and the glories of the coming judgment.

In the winding up of the ages there will be a coming of which all previous ones were foretokens and emblems. This pre-eminent coming of the Son of man usually is so associated with the phrase as to blind to the fact that it is the last of the interventions of the Son of man which are distinguishable from the unceasing influence of his will upon the course of human affairs—is the last of a widening series becoming ever more and more self-revealing. But the meaning of the phrase is not exhausted by great epochs. It is also the symbol of the never-ceasing coming of the Lord, in each and every moment, nearer to the fore-ordained triumph of his coming in the end of time. A kingdom's conquest is not to be wholly referred to the "crowning victory." Deliberation in councils, military equipment, marches and sieges and lost battles lead up to the last decisive conflict, which would not have been a victory without the more silent or even disastrous hours; and if one phrase

could sum up all the war it would have to include in its significance the entire on-going of all those related events. Like this is one significance of the phrase, "the coming of the Son of man." It stands for great judgments and also for the succession of events in the coming of the Lord's kingdom from its beginning to the end of time. It is a word-symbol of the Lord's ascension of his throne which never ceases; though to human eyes he seems to take a step at a time with centuries between.

The coming of the Son of man, seen by the eye of faith, is glorious. It strikes his enemies with terror. To his friends it gives courage and hope, though with conflicting emotions they hear cries that call "on the rocks and mountains."

THUS FAR that which in the holy mount Peter, James, and John in part beheld has been considered in the light of the gospel of Saint Matthew in which it is "a coming of the Son of man." In the gospels of Saint Mark and Saint Luke it is "a coming of the kingdom of heaven." *Therefore* it was both. *Therefore* it was a coming of the Son of man to begin that kingdom which "cometh not with observation." And that all things pass from the hidden to the seen by stages of growth and development is a universal law. There is a moment, usually a difficult one to fix upon, in which each thing begins to be—a moment which draws to itself whatever belongs to it in the past and contains within itself whatever is to unfold in the future; and yet in every growth there are several beginnings. This holds good in both the material and the spiritual worlds. At the Pentecost the fulfilling of the promise of the Spirit began,



yet there was a beginning before that, when our Lord breathed on the company of disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Therefore we are not to look for such a commencement of the kingdom of heaven as will at once exclude from our thoughts all consideration of such epochs as the incarnation, the baptism, and the temptation; and yet those events, and all the life of our Lord before, were a preparation for that moment when, with the accepted confession of his true divinity, his kingdom began. Before that time it had only an ideal existence in the will and purpose of its Lord. *Then* it had a real existence in space and time. *Then* it was set up in the souls of men.

The disciples assented to what was said by Peter; it was their confession also; and yet our Lord's direct address to Peter makes it not improbable that his faith kindled up their faith and brought them to his own decision. However that may have been, our Lord's saying to Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," makes it certain that the heart of Peter was in unison with the heart and will of God. And so were the hearts of Abraham and his son Isaac when their agreeing self-devotion prefigured the self-devotion of the Father and the Son which, in the sacrifice on Calvary, taketh away the sin of the world. And, if I read the Scriptures aright, divine intervention in human affairs is in some sense so conditioned upon the human will that the self-devotion of Abraham the father, and of Isaac the son, not merely prefigured but made possible that which afterward came to pass. This seems to me warranted by this Scripture: "The

Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven and said; By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." And I find the same truth and fact in the answer of the blessed Mary. For when "the angel said, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. . . . the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God, . . . *Mary said, Behold the hand-maid of the Lord.*"

At the northern Bethany the disciples' acceptance of Christ Jesus was consequent upon the witness of the Baptist, whose witness was based upon signs from heaven. Their confession at Cesarea Philippi was a sign of the quickening of that embryo of faith into life. And that confession is so joined by our Lord and by his evangelists to what is known as the transfiguration as to make it apparent that the faith of the twelve, shown in their accepted confession, was prerequisite to the beginning of the coming of the Son of man in his kingdom—a coming which runs through the ages, and at great epochs almost visibly prepares for and prefigures his visible coming in the end of the world.

It is reasonable to believe that what is called the transfiguration was a more open epoch in the invisible

world than in this, *for in that world is the chief seat of the dominion of the Lord.* It is reasonable to believe that it there had relations to the faithful dead, innumerable as the sands of the sea. Though the first signs of the dominion of the Eternal Word in the glorified form of the Son of the blessed Virgin were here shown to only three Christians, and for a time they were "to tell the vision to no man," yet surely the beginning of his universal kingdom was known with glad rejoicing by holy angels and by the spirits of the just made perfect. And it is the more reasonable to believe this, as it was the beginning of a kingdom whose title in the earliest gospel, "The kingdom of the heavens," and the star at the birth of its King, mark and prophesy that its dominion will include the starry worlds.

The loyal subjects of the true Prince do not wait for his final victory before they place on his head the crown of a realm a usurper holds, thus owning his right and proclaiming their assurance that he will reconquer his dominions. It is not inconceivable or impossible that the Eternal Word, in the form of the man Christ Jesus, should have been proclaimed in the highest heaven head over all things created; and when Christ Jesus had proved to chosen witnesses that he was "the Son of the living God," and his kingdom had begun in their souls, would his solemn inauguration as the head of an eternal, universal kingdom have been longer delayed? May he not have been crowned by the Omniscient as Conqueror when in his life on earth *his kingdom began*, though his kingdom then was set up in the hearts of only a few disciples? If not, then he cannot as yet have been crowned, for

as yet, in its full power and glory, his kingdom does not exist. And though it may be said that beyond reason this carries a human idea into the superhuman world, and things there are not to be thought of as so like to things on the earth, yet our ignorance of the celestial sphere may as well count for as against the idea; and *the things in the tabernacle in the wilderness were "made after the pattern of things in the heavens."*

The Son of man so comes in his kingdom as the destroyer of the kingdom of Satan that every epoch in his coming is a time of destruction; and the time of the mystery in the holy mount accords with the twofold idea in a coming of the Son of man, namely, of a coming to destroy and a coming to redeem. For the Jews had then rejected Jesus as the Christ. In Galilee he had been rejected by the sacerdotal conclave at Magdala; and that he was rejected by the people also is plain from the answer to the question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" Judea was more hostile than Galilee, and its delivering him up to the Romans was the carrying out of long-predetermined sin. Now, the decrees of heaven and their execution are not simultaneous. Our patient God, more long-suffering than angry Jonah, waited to see what Nineveh would do; and so he may have waited while above Jerusalem with arm uplifted stood his angel of vengeance.

Like some of the heavenly bodies, the transfiguration turns toward us an illuminated side, while turned away from us there is a side we cannot see. The wonder in the holy mount is a word half uttered. That all is not told is very certain from the fact stated

only by Saint Luke, that for a time the disciples slept or lay in a trance. They were all night on the mountain. Their trance or sleep may have lasted for hours. And though we know not how far duration in eternity can be measured in time, yet there may be great significance in the fact that what then transpired did not, as has commonly been supposed, come and go almost in an instant.

The Master takes Peter, James, and John his brother up into "a high mountain apart." In the night, as he was praying, his form was glorified, his garments were changed into raiment befitting the celestial courts. The three men, overpowered by the sudden splendor, lay asleep, or in a trance. *Where was their Master then?* Had he not gone where mortal foot or eye might not follow him? This world will never know what august scenes may have passed within the veil. But when the disciples awoke Moses and Elias were with Christ Jesus. His Church is there in the person of those immortals who represented the unseen world, and of the three men. Our glorified Lord stands between those men who had come up to the gates of that world and those who had come from the invisible world. The disciples hear him talk with them concerning his exode at Jerusalem. Then the lawgiver and the prophet of the old time pass from sight. The three disciples are left alone with Jesus. A bright cloud overshadows the place, and to Peter, James, and John, who were there to hear for the human race, a voice came from "the excellent glory," saying, "This is my beloved Son! HEAR HIM."

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE CHRIST SECURES FREEDOM AND UNITY.

As in a ship bound to the Indies or distant islands of southern seas, bold seamen, clearing the land-locked harbor, sail down the bay besprinkled with islets, pass the revolving light kindling in the shades of evening till at last they dimly see the open ocean, so now there opens before us the uncomprehended vastness of that thought of God, the kingdom of the heavens.

The first question ever asked of that kingdom was sadly ominous of unnumbered woes that have indeed come. *Who shall be the greatest?* was the first question concerning the kingdom of heaven. "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven," our Lord then said, setting in the midst of the disciples a little child as an image of humility. That humility is a holy mystery! Startling and strange the sacred paradox, "Whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted." It is not true in this world, but in the kingdom of God. For, as in dying, a man "with inward horror of falling into naught," with heart-rending pangs, bewildering fears, gives up his old familiar being, so man giving up his own self dies in humility. He awakes in God. Self-reliance is put away. He commits himself unto the Lord. He saith, "The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the



everlasting arms," "Thou art my sun and my shield," "Thou coveredst my head in the day of battle." Yet God forges for him no coat of mail. He puts no sword in his hands. His defense is spiritual. His guards are set in the thoughts of men.

When in Peter's question and in the humility of the little child the human and the divine ideas of the kingdom of the heavens were set face to face, the word of the Lord was broad as the occasion. In the first twenty verses of the seventeenth chapter of Saint Matthew's holy gospel our Lord lays down rules which, like the rules in arithmetic or the problems of geometry, are related to each other, while each rule is complete in itself and applies to multitudes of facts. By those rules the Son of God affirmed and secured in his kingdom the inviolability of each soul, and the association of all souls—the freedom of each and the unity of all.

If the conscience be inviolate the soul is free; and into the idea of the inviolability of the conscience the Lord breathed a breath of life when he said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!" History bears solemn witness to this prophecy of "offenses;" and yet these words have been a safeguard to liberty. These and other

words of like power, heard by the disciples only, were spoken to be heard of all; and the "woe unto the world" and "to that man by whom the offense cometh" warn each and every one. Our Lord guards against the thought that any man who hurts his little ones may set up the defense that he shared in a sin common to his age, his nation, or his sect.

In the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth verses there is more of the force of will; more of the warmth of the heart in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth verses. There the Christ pleads his own love for his "little ones." In a figure which makes the kindling of the fires of persecution in his holy name strange wickedness, he likens himself to a shepherd who on the mountain leaves his flock for one lost sheep. And his words, which defend the freedom of the souls of his children, clothe every human creature with their power; for if they do not reach to all, yet only God knows whom they do reach.

This word of Christ Jesus, that the conscience in which God meets with man is inviolable, carries with it the equality of every human creature before the law of God, cultured or uncultured, poor or rich, "Gentile or Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free;" and the right of every human being to equality before the human law. It began that change which in the year of our Lord 1776 stands out in the famous declaration that the Creator endowed man with the inalienable right to liberty. A century has passed since then, and still the meaning of liberty differs in every zone, in every mind; yet, ever since the Eternal Word in the person of Jesus Christ breathed anew into the human soul the breath of liberty, man has been learn-

ing something of the true meanings, somewhat of the duties and the perils of freedom—here by its presence, there by its absence, here by its being crushed, there by its corrupting into lawlessness. Religious freedom, freedom in its noblest form, has been resisted unto blood; but its martyrs, content to serve God as he thought best, have suffered for his sake with gladness of heart. They have known the dungeon, the wheel, the ax; their bones have been “scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,” that the world might know what the soul can endure for conscience’ sake—in that way might learn, if it would learn it in no other way, that God hath decreed that no power shall be of power enough to chain the chainless mind. And when conclaves, like those of Magdala and Jerusalem, or “purple” kings, or fierce democracies, try to enslave the soul, in the beginning created free and re-taught its freedom by the Son of man, “the Lord doth hold them in derision.”

Christ Jesus, having guarded equality and freedom by promises and threatenings, and having set forth for each of his children a personal love not lost in the great congregation, then sets forth his children in their religious and social relations. Both centralization and isolation are rejected. A man is a man, and there is a church. Though “offenses” come, individuality is still sacred. The wronged must *go alone* to the wrong-doer. If not heard, he is to go again with mutual friends. If the wrong-doer hear them not he must come before the congregation. If he will not hearken to the congregation he is no longer to be numbered among its members. Could any provision for peace and harmony be more simple or more

effective? It respects the freedom of the individual while it provides for the unity of all. And where three, *or even two*, meet in his name Christ himself meets with them and their united prayers are heard.

Christian union is not a mechanical or outward thing. It comes not of forms. It comes not of coercion. It so comes of choice that liberty and union are in harmony. It may be that philosophy can no more reconcile them than it can reconcile the sovereignty of God and the free-will of man; but harmonies which are too fine for the mind to hear touch the heart. "The *service* of God is perfect freedom;" and there is perfect freedom in the love-born union of Christians. The Christian heart, which longs for sympathy in its sorrows, help in its temptations, and delights in sharing its hopes and joys with kindred spirits, *freely* acts out its own nature in a companionship known to Moses of old, when he said, "*Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.*"

In the household of faith the freedom of each and the unity of all go together, depend upon, and uphold each other. Neither can be perfect unless the other be perfect. And as only sin-freed spirits, with volitions unhindered by doubt or passion, by fear or inward strife, can enter into that perfect Christian union in which the free volitions of each can, to the full, find motive and joy, action and rest, Christian union in its perfection will come only when the kingdom for which our Lord taught his family ever to pray shall have fully come. And yet each age, race, and individual will be judged by its helping on or its hindering the freedom of each soul, the unity of all, of which our Lord laid down the laws in the word of

which the occasion was the question, "Who shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Those laws are the historic geometry of God. The ancient world could not receive those laws; and in the framing of the modern world our Lord chose for his chief workmen the Germanic and Celtic races, whose migrations and conquests shaped the character and history of the European nations.\* In some of their characteristics the Celtic and Teutonic races were preconfigured for the reception of the social ideas of our Redeemer and Lord. As far back as the time when he was on the earth the traits of the Germanic and Celtic races are known; for Cæsar the statesman and Tacitus the historian as thoughtfully studied and as carefully portrayed their characteristics as if they divined something of the future destiny of those races. Among the Celts and Teutons there was not, as among the Asiatic races, any civic or religious *castes* with powers and privileges not in some measure common to them all. They had a passion for individual liberty and for associated life. The knight riding forth alone in quest of adventures is a type of the one sentiment, the knight in a close-knit order is a type of the other. So passionate in friendship were the Germans that if one of two companions in arms was killed the survivor sometimes slew himself by the corpse of his comrade. And the affectionate disposition of both the Celtic and Teutonic races is seen in the clanship of the feudal days.

In those two great races the love of freedom tended to territorial changes and subdivisions—a tendency

\* Save those of Slavonic origin, who only of late have been conspicuous in history.

favored by the geographical features of Europe. Asia, by its natural features, is more the continent of uniformity. The Asiatics from time immemorial have congregated in multitudinous cities, in vast empires, and from the comparative weakness of the individual sentiment there has been less of change in Asia than in Europe—as so clearly seen in China, and visible, perhaps, in the Eastern churches—while the individuality and energy consequent upon the passion for freedom, in the two great formative races of modern Europe, have been one of the chief causes of the varied and picturesque life of Europe, though, with its divers nations and languages, Europe, apart from the Slavonic regions, is only one country.\*

The Teutons and Celts were not worn out like the Egyptians, crushed as were the Greeks, or corrupt like the Latins. Their nature, forest-nurtured and with a touch of the sea, was more varied than that of the Arabs of the changeless, monotonous desert. They were not savages, like the Africans. They were not so low down in civilization that their minds could not be awakened to new ideas. They were not so civilized that their minds were preoccupied. Unweakened by luxury, undebased by slavery, they were strong and ready to destroy and to re-create. Their qualities fitted them to be called forth from their forests, when needed of the Lord, to sweep away the guilty world; and they fitted them so far to receive his truth that it should become the inner life of a new civilization.

If any one of my readers doubt whether a few words called forth by the question, "*Who shall be*

\* See as to that the opinion of Napoleon, as given by Bourrienne.



*the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*" could have been of such far-reaching, such organizing force that centuries of history illuminate their purpose and bear witness to their power, let me ask, If you really and truly believe that the Eternal Word, who gave life to the forests, form to the hills, and stretched the heavens abroad, dwelt among us, ought you not to believe that his words must be as life-giving, as pervasive, and as lasting in the human world as in the natural world? In the material world men have been slow in finding out the breadth of his laws, which are opening more and more their full force and meaning. The first time a stone was thrown into the air and seen to fall it was known that so it would ever fall. But ages passed before men knew that the force which draws the pebble down reaches to the stars in their courses, and alike holds together the particles of the stone and the globe itself.

And now let us look at this world-changing word of Christ Jesus from another point of view. At that stage in the training of the disciples, when their hearts were excited and bewildered by selfish desires, would it not have tempted them had their Master then said any thing of the offices of his Church? That they were far from fully comprehending or receiving what he did say comes out instantly when Peter tries to take hold of what was said of forgiving wrong-doers. In the days of the Herods, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, that sounded strangely. On *that one idea* Peter seized hold; and his inquiry recalls his question but a little while before, "Who shall be the greatest?" *Then* he was bent on knowing *that*; and *now*, perhaps unwittingly setting himself against the new

teaching, he would know if he might not strike after forgiving a great deal. He may have thought a seven-fold forgiving was a magnanimous recognition and acceptance of his Master's teaching. Or perhaps he thought his carrying it out so very far would call out some re-shaping and limiting of the precept. Then, no doubt with kindling eyes, the Master said to Peter, "*Not seven times, but seventy times seven.*" And our Lord, leaving to the comment of time what he had said of that city of God whose majestic beauty in all its fair proportions it is yet in vain to try to imagine, enforced his words by a parable for the conscience and by a motive of force with all—the same motive thus set forth in his Sermon on the Mount: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

## CHAPTER XXII.

SAINT LUKE'S GOSPEL FROM IX, 51, TO XVIII, 15.

AFTER the word of the Lord on freedom and union Saint Matthew goes on to say: "And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan." Between the two events in this verse—the final leave-taking of Galilee and the sojourn beyond Jordan—there were months of busy life which Saint Matthew passed over in a way characteristic of the gospel writers. Saint Mark did the same. Saint Luke tells of some things said and done between those two points of time. Saint John tells of more—how our Lord then went up to the feast of tabernacles and of what there took place. After that Saint John's silence is like the silence just noted; for, without a word as to the next two months, he goes on to say, "It was the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. . . . And the Jews sought to take him; but he escaped out of their hand, and went away beyond Jordan." In connection with these facts there comes up a *problem in Saint Luke's gospel which comments confessedly have not solved*; and thoughtful, patient attention and consideration need to be given to all the parts of its explanation. The problem is to account for a distinguishing and surprising feature of the third gospel. This is a long section, including

eight full chapters and parts of two others, three hundred and fifty verses or nearly a third of the whole gospel where it does not run parallel with the first and second gospels, as it does before and afterward. This section reaches from chapter ix, 51, to xviii, 15.

It begins darkly. For of the time of the section, and of all the time till the crucifixion, it discloses, and not very clearly, this characteristic: "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." This timid translation does not fully and clearly give the remarkable character ascribed by Saint Luke to the time of which he is about to tell. It was a time "when the days of our Lord's ascension (*ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ*) were fulfilling."\* The verse seems to intimate something it does not fully reveal; and yet some other Scriptures *may* be in latent harmony with it, and its language *seems* to accord with what has been said of the transfiguration; for Christ Jesus talked with Moses and Elias of "*the exodus*" †

\* Saint Jerome's translation is, "*Factum est autem dum compleretur dies assumptionis ejus*" (Vulgate); and none will question that the words are rightly translated above. The noun, which is not elsewhere in the New Testament, comes from the verb used for the ascension in Saint Mark xvi, 19; Acts i, 2, 11, 22, and by Saint Paul in 1 Tim. iii, 16. Wordsworth says: "The verb was prepared for the sense of ascension by its application in the Septuagint to Elijah (2 Kings ii, 9-11)."

† Την ἐξοδον, Saint Luke ix, 31. The word *exodus* came into the Greek of the Jews from the Septuagint, and the Bible has so Anglicized the word that here it should have been used. Here, as in the case of the word *magi*, the received rendering gives an idea that is in the word, but does not give all there is in it. The word brings up much in the Books of Moses and in other parts of Scripture. "Exodus is a weighty word involving the passion, cross, death, resurrection, and ascension."

he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. As he was coming down from the holy mount he named it; and Saint Mark says that "*henceforth*" he "*taught*" it to all his disciples. Saint Matthew gives two examples of such teaching while "Jesus yet abode in Galilee;" and the thought of Saint Luke may have been in his mind when, of a time after and near the transfiguration, he said, "*From that time forth* began Jesus to show unto his disciples how he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised again the third day." Here Saint Matthew may have had a less piercing insight into times and seasons than Saint Luke—as when two friends of marked individuality, at moments, so exchange characters that in his peculiar gift the one is surpassed by the other. Be this as it may, in that verse of Saint Luke's gospel there is the voice of the Holy Spirit; and the verse should remind us of the mystery there must be, and will forever be, in the life of the Eternal Word in the form of the man Christ Jesus. Yet there is a remarkable and close agreement between what is so darkly intimated in the verse of Saint Luke, and with which, though somewhat doubtfully, other things in the earlier gospel seem to accord, and these words, given in the last gospel, which our Lord said on the day of his entry into Jerusalem, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John xii, 27).

In that verse of Saint Luke *there is something else, as to which there has been a conflict of opinions.* There he says that in the days of which he is about

to write Christ Jesus "steadily set his face to go to Jerusalem." Certainly this denotes a fixed purpose continuing for a considerable time; and yet, as Saint Luke goes on to tell of a journey when our Lord "sent messengers before his face," and whose terminus evidently was Jerusalem, many think he must be speaking of our Lord's last journey. But the events in the long section are so many and such as could not all have taken place in one journey. And on the phrase "to go up to Jerusalem" light is thrown when the brethren of our Lord would have had him "*go up*" to proclaim to Israel that he was the Christ. Then he said, "Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up, for my time is not yet full come." Yet he did "*go up*;" and, therefore, the use of this phrase in its highest sense by the Saviour might consist with visits to Jerusalem in its common every-day sense. And its possible meaning in that verse of Saint Luke's becomes its certain meaning, when that evangelist tells that "after those things" other things took place, which make it impossible that the journey then spoken of was the last journey.

With a journey of which only two or three events are told the long section opens. This incomplete narrative ends at the fifteenth verse; for "after those things" comes the charge to the seventy. And as only in Galilee could so many disciples well have been selected for such a mission, and as the woe to Capernaum points to that city, it is reasonable to conclude that our Lord went back to Galilee after the journey to Jerusalem, of which, while "*on the way*," and while "*on the way*" *only*, some things are told. The joyful return of the seventy is antici-



pated, and it is joined to their going forth, but no intimation is given of its time or place. And throughout the section the evangelist cares as little for chronology or topography as one who, freely writing out things in his own life in the order of their association in his memory, takes little note of time or place. Possibly, seeing that some of our Lord's sayings and doings of an earlier day were not in the gospels earlier than his own, Saint Luke may have set down some few of them; and this is the more probable if, as some think, there really are signs of a moral order in the section.\*

Now comes this perplexing question: How could Saint Matthew have left out almost all there is in Saint Luke's long section? How can it be that in the earliest gospel there is hardly one of its beauties and glories? This is the more strange because of its full portraiture of the course of events leading on toward the giving up of Galilee. True it is that within his own field Saint Matthew did not write of every thing.

\* In Saint Mark x, 1, if for *dia* we read *kai*, "He cometh into the coasts of Judea, and the farther side of Jordan," then we must accept Caspari's opinion (page 176) that Saint Mark points toward Jerusalem, and not to our Lord's going up there to the feast of the dedication only, but also to the feast of tabernacles; and if so, then his statement would agree with Saint Luke's.

In New Testament Greek *opla*, commonly rendered coasts or borders, does not always have so restricted a sense. Quite as often it means the land, region, country of a tribe, people, or city (Matt. iv, 13; viii, 34; xv, 22; Mark vii, 31; Acts xiii, 50), and it is flexible enough at times to include their borders: and thus Saint Mark may point to all the time between the end of our Lord's public ministry in Galilee and his going beyond Jordan to the northern Bethany; and Saint Mark's words take in all of Perea. Like Saint Matthew, he says nothing of events in any of the journeys to Jerusalem save the last; but they both speak of things in the region beyond Jordan.

He felt, like Saint John, that the world could not hold the books if every thing were written. And the Oriental amplitude of that saying is justified by the facts that in the Evangeliad only the events of passion week (and then with a day of silence) are continuously told; that for it are selected things said and done in little more than thrice the number of days in a week; that besides those things told only by Saint Luke our Lord said and did many things whose only record is in heaven; and still it does look strange that so much that is so precious was left out of the earliest gospel. We could not bear its loss—a light and a glory would pass from our memories, our thoughts, our hearts, and our lives, with the loss of the welcome to the prodigal son, of the prayer of the penitent publican. How could Saint Matthew have left out such things? *That is the problem.* It lessens my wonder at the low view that some have taken of the origin and construction of the gospels, and yet the divine power indwelling in the holy gospels can always be felt, even though questions arise and no answers come. Here the answer does come. Here the reasons for what seems so strange can be discovered. As to Saint Mark, the problem is explained by the origin and construction of his gospel.\* As to the earlier gospel of Saint Matthew, the basis of the explanation is *the compact between the two apostolic evangelists which left all that pertained to the Judean ministry to Saint John.* In its spirit their agreement reached to all of our Lord's journeyings to the holy city—to all save the last. Saint Matthew so under-

\* As stated in the *Thoughts*; and the fact named above is confirmation of what is there said.

stood it. Saint Luke's course makes it certain that the agreement between the two apostles was not a secret. Their brethren knew it. And Saint Luke knew it, *for he governed himself by it*. With the exception of one comparatively unimportant incident, for naming which there was urgent reason, in the whole of his long section he told of nothing that took place in Judea or in Jerusalem.

Of the conjecture that the parable of the Pharisee and the publican was spoken *in the temple* nothing need be said; and there is no reason for thinking that the parable of the man who fell among thieves must have been spoken in the neighborhood of the city. Its scene was that wild and strange ravine along which ran the short and only road from Jerusalem to the great city of Jericho. That road was as well known to Jews the world over as the pass they call the Notch in the White Hills is known to men born in New Hampshire; and that parable might have been spoken to Jews in Ctesiphon in sight of the Persian hills, by the shore of the Nile, in the Babylonian plain, in the island of Cyprus, to say nothing of Galilee or "the coasts beyond Jordan."

From Saint Luke's purposely keeping away from Jerusalem, breaking off his narrative of the first going thither before the city comes in sight, telling of journeys ever tending there and never getting there, clear light is thrown upon Saint Matthew's reason for leaving so much out of his gospel. And this, too, is very important. Saint Matthew knew it would not be left out of the Evangeliad, for he left it to his associate, Saint John. And it would have been in his gospel had not the third evangelist been

permitted and instructed by the Holy Ghost to enter and take possession of the neutral territory.\*

Thus far we have looked upon the human side of these things, but there is another side which should be thought upon with thankfulness. Had those things, which the first evangelist left to the fourth, and which by the ordaining will of God were told by the third, been told by Saint John, the marvelous unity of his holy gospel would have been impossible. And on looking farther somewhat more is seen in the *Evangeliad* of the unity of a divine creation.

The historic bent and quality of Saint Matthew's intellect appears in his selecting only parables of an historic kind—that is, parables treating of the nature, development, and laws of the kingdom.† The parables in his thirteenth chapter are of this historic character, and the same thing is seen in the parables in his twenty-first and twenty-second chapters. They run back, tracing the apostasy of the Jews, and run forward, foretelling their rejection and judgment and the effect upon the world of the preaching of the truth. Now, after the transfiguration there was, even more

\* On revising my manuscript I was struck with the agreement of this view with the way and manner of Saint John. He does tell of what passed between our Lord and his brothers just before the feast of tabernacles, but that accounts for his going up to the city "as it were in secret," and at so late a day that the Jews wondered whether he was coming. (See vii, 3-9, 11-14.) And abruptly he tells of his next going up (x, 22), with not a word as to where he was or what he was doing meanwhile; not a word as to where he started from, and, just as before, not a word as to any event on the journey.

† This is a sure mark and sign that only one mind was directly concerned in planning his gospel, and would almost establish the fact, even without its sure witness in the memory of the ever-existing family of Christ.

than before, a world-wide breadth in the teaching of our Lord, and it was a purpose of Saint Matthew to bring out that teaching. But in the section in Saint Luke several of the parables are not of the historic character or the breadth that well fitted them for such a purpose—that of the rich fool, for example. Thus the divine shaping of the course of Saint Luke, which favored the unity of the holy gospel of Saint John, also preserved some things not so well suited to the purpose of Saint Matthew; and, apprehending how all these things went to make the construction of the Evangeliad perfect, we should gratefully own that divine wisdom gave its peculiar and in some respects solitary place and character to that precious section in the holy gospel of Saint Luke.

As to that section there is still a difficulty which must be touched upon: some words are there said by our Lord at times and places other than in Saint Matthew's gospel, and with some differences. The like of this is met with in the two sermons; and in general the explanation is the same, namely, that our Lord often repeated things with variations. Yet here let us consider the repetition of the words, "*The Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*" Saint Luke expressly states that those words were said "as they went in the way" on that first journey, which in part he described. In his long section times are seldom fixed by Saint Luke, but he did so in this case, seeing that Saint Matthew recited those words when telling of our Lord's going to Gadara. In that early day some wanted to go in the ship with Jesus; and Saint Matthew, recalling the eagerness at that embarkation in contrast with scenes of a later time, is reminded

of words then spoken; he felt they suited the purpose of his eighth and ninth chapters as well as any that his Master ever said, because they depicted so pitifully his usual homeless life; and he thought it would be seen that they were not of that day and hour, because just before he had told of his Master's then having a home in the house of Peter. The second of his two instances of like conduct may have been recalled by association of ideas—for they rather break in upon the story; and as the last brings out the earnestness characteristic of our Lord it well suits the purpose of those chapters. That is the more apparent when Saint Matthew leaves out some words given by Saint Luke; and, as in both cases the sincerity of those who proffered their service was questionable, the incidents suit the tone of his gospel. Saint Luke's second incident, like the first, may have happened on the journey told in part; or it may have come to his mind by association of ideas; and the third also, which is given by him only. Just how some of these things were may be of little consequence, but the more microscopic the comparative study of the gospels the better their truth to nature and the thoughtfulness of their writers are known and felt: as here, on noting that Saint Luke marks the time of the first incident, and of that one only.\*

As to the *repetitions* in that section of Saint Luke

\* There is little in the first gospel which has more of the look of the fragmentary character which Neander so illogically gave it than those verses in Saint Matthew. So to me it seemed for years before I saw, with a clearness I cannot put into words, how naturally they come in just at the moment of the embarkation.

I think that no one should try to portray the face and form of our Lord, for the gospels say nothing of either; yet the scene would have



or elsewhere, the truth is that if there were no repetitions in the holy gospels it would tell against their portraiture of our Lord's way and manner of teaching, which could not have been other than they say it was. Light thrown upon the meaning of the words, or greater force given them by their occasion, warranted repetition. And whoever tries to determine which of their times is the more suitable will learn that it cannot be done. He will find that the one is as much so as the other.

One of those repetitions, the lament over Jerusalem, is poetry such as lives in memory, and, like a strain of music, often comes to mind. In two others outbursts of feeling are embodied in poetic forms. They are the woe to the unrepentant cities, and this grateful communion with God: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Here may be seen the minuteness of the thoughtful care in the gospel writers, for Saint Matthew—although he did not always do so—marks that the words were said "at that time" which he is describing. Seeing this, Saint Luke makes a like statement with just this difference: he makes it more emphatic than he otherwise would, saying, *at*

been a fine subject for Rubens—Capernaum and the plain of Genesaret, in the foreground the people with eager faces asking if they might go; the ready boat, the lake, and in the distance the signs of the coming storm.

*that very time*; and here an explanatory paraphrase, after the manner and style of the Targums, would run thus: When the joyous seventy returned *at that very time also*, our Lord repeated the same prayer of thankfulness that he before prayed on the day there came the tidings of the murder of John.

The form of prayer in the Sermon on the Mount was given for all; and therefore it would have been natural had the disciples asked for a special form. But they asked their Lord to teach them how to pray; and his repeating the form of prayer before given brings out the fact that every thing is included in it. It is true to nature that while he thus recalls that prayer he gives it with some variations, though in its spirit the same and in its words nearly the same. Then our Lord, more directly answering their request, tells them in a parable (found nowhere else) to be importunate in prayer; for their encouragement he repeats promises with a few hopeful words also said before in the hearing of all; and these things, in addition to the arguments before, prove that the gospel of Saint Luke gives no countenance to the notion that originally the prayer was no part of the sermon.

But there is no need to go on with what often has been well treated by others. It is enough to say that all the seeming differences as to things of this kind in that section or elsewhere in Saint Luke's gospel, and similar things in Saint Matthew's gospel, can be harmonized when closely and intelligently, fairly and fully, looked into.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE WORD OF OUR LORD ON MARRIAGE.

"AND it came to pass, that when" (in Capernaum) "Jesus had finished these sayings" (in chapter xviii) "he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan." Saint Matthew, in this first verse of his nineteenth chapter, in that part of his gospel reaching from the transfiguration to Calvary, opens a section with the ending of the ministry of Christ in Galilee and his going beyond Jordan. For reasons before given, he tells nothing of what took place in the two months between the events put in juxtaposition. Its only record is in the long section in Saint Luke and in the gospel of Saint John.

Saint Mark says that in the region beyond Jordan "the people resorted unto Jesus again." Saint John says, "He there abode, and many believed on him there;" and he gives this reason why that district was more friendly than Galilee had become: "John baptized there before. And many said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true."\* Saint Matthew tells that "great multitudes followed him, and he healed them;" but here he was moved by the Holy Spirit to witness *to words of the Lord*. As he was led by the Spirit to elect the

\* Between Saint John's telling of what the people said and what Saint Matthew only tells of miracles there is a latent, undesigned coincidence. (See John x, 40-42.)

word on freedom and unity by which Christ Jesus, before "he departed from Galilee," began to construct the fabric of his Church, as an element in his proof of his divinity, so here Saint Matthew is led by the Spirit to elect for the same purpose the word of Christ Jesus *on marriage, which consecrates and makes sure the family, the unit and basis of the State.*

Its seemingly casual occasion came from the wickedness of the Pharisees, who were angered by the people's resorting to Jesus again, by the "many who believed," by the "miracles" wrought "beyond Jordan;" and who sought his life. Jesus was within reach of the Herod who murdered John because he condemned the divorce of his wife and his marriage with Herodias. And, "tempting" Jesus, the Pharisees came and asked him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Knowing their craft, yet foreknowing that Calvary was nigh, our Lord took the occasion, offered by the plot of his enemies, openly to declare the relations of the sexes and to lay down the law and the limitations of marriage.

To those teachers of the people, professedly learned in the Scriptures, he said, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. For this cause shall a man cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh." *The whole of that ancient Scripture which the Pharisees "had read" our Lord made a part of his word on marriage.* It reads thus: "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over

every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. i, 26-28). This great first charter to man (all of whose rights are gifts of God) stands at the head of all legal documents, the first grant on record, and few have been so clear. The historical narrative is so interwoven with it as to form a part of it; and, taking the instrument as a whole, no father making a deed of gift to a son and a daughter, and meaning to make them equal in the gift, could have been more precise in his terms. The charter runs first to man to guard the unity of the human race; then, its style changing, it runs to man and woman, granting the dominion it conveys equally to each and all to each. To use the language of the common law, it does not make them tenants in common, but joint tenants; "they have one and the same interest, accruing by one and the same conveyance, commencing at one and the same time, and held by one and the same undivided possession." \*

This great charter established the equality of man and woman on the same basis as every other fact—on the will of God. This great charter, though forfeited by man and woman, was afterward partially revived, and its teachings are treated as authoritative by our Lord. The revelation in that ancient Scripture of the

\* Blackstone on the Laws of England, Book III, chap. xii.

equality of the sexes was then neither heeded nor understood in Judea. And the apostate heathen did not remember it. Generally among them in the time of Christ, as among them now, woman was the slave, or little better than the slave, of man ; and sometimes she was hardly allowed the rights of a human being. Her estate was better among the Hebrews ; yet to them the Scripture on which Christ Jesus based his law of marriage was so dead a letter that when he recalled it and said, "He which made them at the beginning made them male and female ; for this cause shall a man cleave to his wife, and they are no more twain, but one flesh ; what therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder," his disciples (who, like all the Jews, held it a duty to marry) thought the forbidding the husband to treat his wife as a chattel was too hard ; and, arguing against it, they said, "*Then it is not good for a man to marry.*" On their bold denial that the law could be put up with, or at least their open unwillingness to accept it, our Lord said, "All cannot receive my saying ;" and he went on to show that his law did not apply to all, and to give the reasons, saying, "There are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb : and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men : and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." Then follows, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it"—words that refer back to his law of marriage, and complete an exposition of the relations of the sexes and of marriage, marvelous in its condensation, yet of the greatest precision, fullness, and breadth. Even from his lips few the words which compress into such



brief compass so much truth, *so many truths*; and on some of those truths I shall dwell one by one.

The truth that parentage is one of the great ends of the marriage institution is inwrought into the ancient Scripture which our Lord made an integral part of his word on marriage, for therein the command "to multiply and replenish the earth" is joined on to the creation of the sexes. And this truth is inwrought into what our Lord said of the limitations of marriage, by his use *four times over of a word which sets forth this idea with ancient Oriental scriptural simplicity, naturalness, and plainness.*

Well might parentage be made secure in the constituting of the human race. In our own time the spermiatic word of the Creator in the vegetable kingdom was suffered to fail in that humble root the potato in an island within the dominions and almost within hailing-distance of the seat of the wealthiest of empires. Then, notwithstanding a great earnestness of charity (in which our own country did its part), tens of thousands of men, women, and children starved to death. And were the life-continuing word of the Creator to be withdrawn from the human kingdom, in a little more than the brief space of man's life noisy cities would be silent. No more the dash of wheels would trouble the sea. There would be no man to till the ground. The earth would be a sepulcher.

As every one knows, there are other ends than parentage in marriage. That ancient Scripture makes this plain by giving as a reason for the creation of woman that "it is not good for man to be alone." And yet it is hardly too much to say that the preservation of infant life, and, consequently, the continuing

existence of the human species, is bound up with the marriage institution ; and therefore a law of marriage was so written by the Creator in the human constitution that even with savage tribes there is something like a family.

Among the heathen polygamy is the form that marriage generally takes, and with it infanticide and wife-desertion go hand in hand ; but we need not go so far abroad as Africa, Polynesia, Turkey, or India to find shameful things in married life ; and still, if we come back from heathen or Moslem lands into Christendom, or through the magic of the imagination enter it from the old classic world, marriage has there been made so much more beautiful by the teachings of the Redeemer that it seems like a new thing.

The Jews, remembering the command given to the parents of the human race in that ancient Scripture which our Lord incorporated into his word on marriage, to “ multiply and replenish the earth,” held it every one’s duty to marry. And only when that idea of the Jews is clearly and fully before the mind can the striking novelty of the last words of the Lord on marriage be estimated aright. They took his hearers by as strange surprise as did his teaching the equality of the sexes, and his forbidding husbands to treat their wives as chattels. Openly and decisively they contradicted a universal opinion of the Jews ; and as striking as the novelty is the sweeping breadth of those few words. Our Lord said there are three classes that have no lot or share in marriage ; that of these the first is made by Nature herself, that the second class is made by the force of circumstances, and that

the third class are those who choose a single life for his kingdom's sake.

The existence of the class first named is related to the fact that with Nature parentage is a chief end of marriage. For, looking forward to the consummate wonder of birth, Nature plants in the human heart instinctive safeguards of the life of the child. Nature allures to marriage by beauty, the sign of health. If health be wanting she steals color from the cheek, roundness from the arm, melody from the voice, light from the eye; for Nature is unwilling to sign the marriage contract when the health of the contracting parties does not guarantee the health of the children.

Avarice, drunkenness, and many other vices are inheritable, like consumption. The child not only is heir to ancestral possessions, but also to ancestral passions; and Nature shows an instinctive distrust of malformed, darkened hearts. As she teaches children what men to like she teaches her maidens whom to trust—for soul-health, as really as bodily health, is with Nature a prerequisite to marriage.

Nature's generative laws are like the great laws of the universe in the greatness of their results, and they seem almost as much beyond human control; yet were religion to call science into counsel, their combining influences, developing in those laws the potencies for good, might so better the human physique that man and woman would swiftly regain much of the health and beauty of Eden.

Besides those so unhappily belonging to the class first named are those naturally averse to the restraints of wedded companionship. Of these the baser sort, having gotten houses and lands, take a wife late in

life, if at all, as the next correct thing to do. Nobler examples of this class are those men who feel, as Lord Bacon said, "that a wife and children are impediments to great enterprises." They are born with a love of adventure common to all, but irresistible in them. Such were the bold navigators who searched out the lakes and rivers of this continent, the islands and shores of the ocean—Champlain, De Soto, Magellan, or stout Cortez, who

"with eagle eyes  
Stared at the Pacific, while all his men  
Looked at each other with a wild surmise  
Silent upon a peak in Darien."

And such the men now fascinated by the fatal polar zone.

Many born musicians, like Mozart, and painters, sculptors, to whom their pursuit is an absorbing passion, might well say, with Michael Angelo, "I am wedded to my art."\* The lives of Milton and Byron, not to speak of many others, make it questionable whether men of the highest creative genius are well fitted by nature for wedlock. They have children not of flesh and blood. Very charming the picture in the *Iliad* of Hector caressing his child while armies wonder at the warrior's delay; yet a nursery is hardly a soldier's place, and we might almost fancy that to heroes Nature begrudged children. A nephew was the heir of Cæsar, and the heir of Napoleon lived but to die.

The second class, "made eunuchs of men," are those whose single life is the painful triumph of circum-

\* Sir Joshua Reynolds said to Flaxman, "I am told you are married; if so, you are ruined as an artist."

stances. The painful triumph! But when there can be no comfortable provision for infancy and childhood, or where the children must lose a parent's care for long intervals, as in the case of soldiers and sailors, marriage is an uncertain blessing. Yet where there cannot be well-advised marriages there will be ill-advised ones, with increase of trouble and sorrow. A great evil indeed! And yet the Church makes little *direct* effort to bring a proper marriage within the reach of all who are fitted for it by nature. But to do that were a difficult thing—wrought out only through reforms that would change the spirit and the frame-work of society.

Into the class of those living single lives not of their own free will also come those whose hearts cling to some hopeless hope or unforgotten grave. To some of such it is the hard duty to put away the feeling; but that killing out of the affection may kill the sensibility. It is better to love in vain than not to love at all. Then neither murmur nor regret! Bright with the hues and glory of youth let the picture hang in the hall of memory! Hopeless love, purified by suffering, and teaching love for all, may turn resignation into praise and thanksgiving!

With the consideration of the third class arises the question whether the lives of those who are single for the kingdom's sake must needs be holier and more useful than wedded lives. In studying this question in the light of history it is found that in ante-Nicean days custom and law prohibited bishops, priests, and deacons from marrying, if unmarried at the time of their ordination. In those early Christian ages the feeling toward marriage, and opinions as to the relations of

the sexes, were a little colored by Oriental and even by gnostic errors as to the inherent evil of matter. And so impure the world was then that chastity seemed almost a contra-natural virtue and hardly possible excepting in extraordinary social conditions.

As to those things there has been a change; but the common error that marriage is a natural state for all still upholds the error that a single life for the kingdom's sake is more acceptable to God than a wedded life. The naming such a class of religious persons by our Lord is taken as a proof of this; but just then he was lifting marriage high above misconceptions and perversions, lifting it so high that "all could not receive it;" and in the absence of any direct word to that effect can his saying that some would forego marriage for his kingdom's sake have been almost in contradiction to what he was then saying in exaltation of marriage?

The circumstances are all against it. Because of his words wives and mothers (there were more than one) were encouraged to bring their "little children," their "infants," that "he should put his hands on them and pray." His disciples were angry. Then the asceticism, which afterward counterfeited the chastity and the holiness of our Lord's kingdom, for the first time crossed his path, and the Lord "*was much displeased.*"\* "He called the children unto him," and "he took them up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them."

He inwrought the truth, that some are born to whom a single life is a natural life, into what he said

\*This is told in Saint Mark, and I cannot but wonder that Saint Matthew did not mark the feeling; but neither does Saint Luke.



of the class first named ; yet his recognition of the fact that Nature herself predisposes and fits some men and some women for a single life has been unnoticed, and the fact itself, as a thing of observation or experience, little heeded. It is commonly thought that a single life for the kingdom's sake is and must be a *contra-natural life*. But our Lord's recognition of the fact that some have a natural, constitutional, inborn fitness and preference for unwedded life establishes the fact that for some of those who are "born again" to burden themselves with the duties and cares of a family would be a violence both to nature and to grace. For though all natural predispositions, sympathies, sensibilities, and powers are purified by grace, it strikes out nothing which the all-wise Creator put into the soul. The kingdom of grace is the kingdom of nature perfected and glorified.

The second class are compelled by force of circumstances to give up marriage unwillingly and painfully ; but in the other two classes the giving it up comes under the law that no one can have every thing, that every one has to forego something. If the giving up of marriage for a single religious life be a *contra-natural sacrifice*, then it is *irreligious* ; for the divinely ordained predispositions of the soul are not to be overruled and set aside by any human will. And from these facts and considerations it follows that the bride who gladly takes the marriage vow may do it as religiously as the nun who gladly takes a vow not to marry, and both have equal acceptance with the Lord.

The notion that those who choose the single religious life must needs do more good than others cannot stand examination. Had the father of Saint

Augustine been a monk or his mother a nun there would have been no Saint Augustine.

In the Greek Church all ministers (save the bishops, who are taken from monasteries) are married. In the Latin Church all ministers are unmarried. In other Churches custom calls for the marriage of ministers. These facts are so indecisive that the question whether a single life, in and of itself, is more sacred than a married life cannot be settled by priestly usage. It is determined by this elementary principle—*in the kingdom of God each and every state and calling is equally sacred*. There the office-work of a monk, a nun, or a minister is no more sacred than the work of a farmer plowing a field, of the pilot steering the ship, of the engineer guiding the train, of the shop-girl behind the counter, of the mother tending her infant, or the merchant at his desk. “*Holiness to the Lord* shall be written on the bells of the horses,” and in that day the notion of any peculiar sacredness in the calling of ministers, deacons, or vestrymen, or of monks or nuns, will share the well-deserved repudiation of the once universally accepted notion of the peculiar, especial sacredness of kings.

Were the error that the lives of women vowed to the single religious state are holier and more useful than the lives of married women done away with, the lives of the former would tend to shield the unmarried sisterhood from a prejudice that disgraces both Christianity and civilization; but if their lives are held to be of a superhuman excellence, reached through direful struggle and self-renunciation, they do nothing to soften a cruel prejudice against the latter. That wrong is the more unreasonable and unjust because the loss

of men's lives in war, on the sea, and in the perils of many of their callings makes the marriage of all women impossible. Some of the sisterhood are unmarried because they would not stoop to a match of convenience; and how noble, how charming they may be Scott well has shown in Rebecca the Jewess, in Minna Troil, and in his matchless portrait of Flora MacIvor.

In the Dark Ages women and men were driven by private wars and public calamities to the shelter of convent and monastery; in our day misery drives many to the shelter of the house of marriage. Starving for companionship and communion, tired of the unrest of the perils of loneliness, a man calls to his side a woman, and they and their children hover together like birds in a storm; and yet blessings so inhere in the marriage institution that the world could hardly go on without such marriages, though they fall below the ideal excellence set forth in the command, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved his Church." As yet that ideal is scarcely within the possibilities. The equality of the sexes was re-affirmed by our Lord as the divine prerequisite to the marriage institution; but the statute-books of the civilized and the customs of the uncivilized nations painfully witness that man has not been willing to admit the equality of the physically weaker sex; and though the Christian nations are approaching that teaching of our Lord they have not fully received it. His social truths, like his spiritual truths, are rays of suns shining with discolored splendors through the black vapors and dense clouds of forming worlds.

To "*the wise and the prudent*" it is enough if the habits and means of the parties go well together

in wedlock! *With them* love is a conventional name for a short-lived delirium, a poetic fantasy, or an illusion. Against this poets plead and the hearts of the young; yet grows not old the tragedy where Capulets and Montagues forego their enmity only when Romeo and Juliet are dead. The heart's starvation, the unvoiced misery, the wreck of reason hidden in every grave-yard, prove that as yet love is hardly more than a dream, a sigh. There was more of truth than the poet knew when thus compressing into music the doubt and sorrow of our time:

"O Love! no habitant of earth art thou!  
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee!  
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart;  
But never yet hath seen, or e'er shall see,  
The naked eye thy form as it should be.  
The mind hath made thee as it peopled heaven  
Even with its own desiring fantasy,  
And to a thought such shape and image given  
As haunts the unquenched soul—parched, wearied, rung, and riven."

The soul does believe in love as it believes in heaven, for it was made for each. If there be no heaven, no love, whence comes the thought, the hope of either? Whence the restless yearning in poetry for love? In romance why does the soul so passionately give itself up to what it does not find in real life? Why its rapt emotion when music echoes its prophetic sigh? Why was none of this restlessness on the passionless face of Grecian art? Is it not that the soul, touched with a trouble of hope, has lost the composure of ancient despair?

What that pre-intimates is not in the hereafter. The incorruptible heavens are unvisited by sorrow and death. There in changeless youth abide the

ideals whose shadowy forms flit through our world of dreams. The ideal of wedded love is the exception, for "in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage." But time has not yet ripened all the qualities of body and soul prerequisite to its ideal beauty which the heart was quickened by the Lord to desire and hope for. Like his spiritual truths, his social truths are evidence of his divinity; yet each of his truths waits for the full acceptance of them all. In that day the love of husband and wife will be the fitting symbol of the love of Christ for his Church. Those who then marry will be those whom God joins together, and health and beauty will be the heritage of children. Marriage will then be a universal blessing, but not the state of all; for our Lord pointed out a class of celibates, made such by the nature he himself did make, and that class will continue as long as the race.

In history our Lord orders affairs for the sake of his truth. By him the nature of the Teutonic and Celtic races was prefigured to the reception of his ideas of freedom and union, and their nature was also prefigured by him for the reception of his ideas of the relations of the sexes. Whatever of power those ideas now have comes in some measure from his having lodged them with peoples whose thoughts of women were nobler, whose lives more chaste, than those of the nations of the Roman Empire. Tacitus, to whom it was a strange idea, records that "the Germans believed *there was something holy and prophetic in woman.*" That belief was one of the germs of chivalry. Yet the fierce traits, the cruel, dehumanizing religious rites of the Celts and the Germans were

such, and so fascinating was the vile corruption of the Latin world, that the conquerors would have been ruined by the conquered had not the redeeming Christ cherished the germs of the nobler social life he had implanted in those races by a humane religion and a pure morality. From those germs have come richly tinted blossoms that now promise golden fruit; but as yet belief in love rests not on what the eye sees, but on what our Redeemer said.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

## OF RICHES AND REWARDS—THE YOUNG RULER.

IN the sixteenth verse of Saint Matthew's nineteenth chapter currents of thought and feeling are set in motion that wind their way on to the seventeenth verse of the twentieth; and riches and rewards would throughout have been the theme of the twentieth chapter had the chapter-division—here not so good as usual—conformed to what is told. Our Lord was then indeed “going up to Jerusalem”—that is, for the last time. “He was gone forth into the way”—on the road then—and yet the scene is very striking, very instructive, and most life-like its portraiture—the manner of Christ Jesus, the character and conduct of the young ruler,\* so uncommon yet so consistent, and the feelings of the disciples, so like themselves, and so true to human nature!

Running, the young ruler came, and, kneeling, cried to Jesus, saying, “Good Master, *what good thing shall I do*, that I may have eternal life?” Only a true

\* How much may be learned by comparing the gospels is well seen in Saint Mark. There Jesus, “*looking on*” the young man, “*loved him*;” there are the words, not to be forgotten, “*one thing thou lackest*;” there the Saviour says to the ruler, “Come, *take up the cross*, and follow me;” there he is seen *looking round upon his disciples* when about to speak to them of riches; and there are these words, “*Hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!*”—words in themselves most important, and in which there is evidence that Saint Mark had Saint Matthew's gospel before him.

belief in the true divinity of Jesus awakened by his words and works could fully justify such an expression of reverential trust; and to test and bring out its real nature and worth our Lord asked him, "*Why callest thou me good?*" there is none good but one, that is, God." The ruler did not confess the divinity of Jesus; and it was clear to all around that the rabbi looked upon him as only one of the prophets, for the Saviour did not wait for his answer, but with instant wisdom meeting his case, asked him, "Hast thou kept the commandments?" "From my youth up," the rabbi answered; and this was not boasting; for his first words give the same effect to those later words, as if he also had said, "Yet I am not perfect." Then how fine the opportunity to have set forth the great truth that "by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified!" But would it have been of use to have pressed the convicting spirituality of the law upon a philosopher already convinced of it? Instead thereof the great Physician, offering the medicine suiting the case, said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Great the power of our Lord's supernatural insight into thoughts, feelings, and character, as seen in the case of Nathanael; and he gave the rabbi reason for belief in his divinity by thus suddenly showing him that his "besetting sin" was lust for gold. Offering for corruptible incorruptible treasure, he helped him to break his fetters; and he called the seeker after eternal life into his own family. But the rabbi was not equal to the moment! And O, the pity of it! Of all with whom the Saviour met, the Roman

officer was of the most historic interest; this upright, courteous, lovable young nobleman, the most fascinating of any. And this fine specimen of the Jews may have been the last hope of his race. A spark may kindle a fire. And, though it be too much to say that had he confessed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, it might have led to the saving of his nation, yet the air of mystery around this man led Dante to say, more wisely than perhaps he knew, "He made the great refusal." \*

The young ruler belonged to a class of persons almost every-where to be found, who, unconscious of selfishness, without hypocrisy and with earnest sincerity, thoughtfully seek for light and life; a class of persons too clear-sighted not to see their birth-stain, too honest, too high-souled to deny it. With open fearlessness they try to rid their natures of what Byron called "the ineradicable taint of sin." Of this class were some of the sages of India, of the wise men of Greece, some even of the Pharisees. They had moments of grace, flashes of light; yet they all—Socrates and Plato with the rest—sought for their well-being in something they could do of themselves and of which the credit would be their own. They all came short of the conviction that God alone can restore a sin-sick soul to health. But the delusion that soul-health—one meaning of the word salvation—may come from a man's own effort to rid himself of sin is not the delusion of philosophers only. *It is the human error.* To pass out of its sphere is to cross one of the lines that mark off the world of truth from the world of delusion. It is so

\* Italian critics, however, do not refer this to the young ruler.

hard to quit its circle of sorcery that the heretical, apostate nations, who lost the true idea of the soul's restoration to health, never found it again. In painful self-sacrifices and in lives of contemplation India tried to find it; China in filial piety, the firm basis of its simple, changeless moral code; Greece in its love and culture of beauty; Rome in order and law; and every-where the Gentiles failed. Almost every-where they confessed their failure. And yet the hope of a divine pardon for sin and of a life-giving union with the living God, through the only name given under heaven among men whereby they are possible, was in-breathed by a promise of God into the souls of the true human race in the hour of its ruin. The light of that promise, with all of good cheer it implied, shone and blazed in the flame and fire of divinely appointed sacrifice. By that rite the martyr Abel confessed his hope of salvation from God alone. In all the lands the form of that rite survived; but only to a few, even of the children of Shem and of Abraham, it prophesied of the sacrifice on Calvary. To the human error that sacrifice gave the death-blow. But it dies hard. It has had in Christendom devotees as painstaking as any among the Gentiles. Saint Simon of the pillar was not outdone by the fakirs of India; and to-day there are Pharisees as complacent in self-righteousness as the old Pharisees. And to-day there are philosophers who contemplate the mercy on the cross only to enrich their culture!

If thoughtful souls, sincerely seeking for life, find, like the young ruler, no rest, some test may open their eyes. That was all it did for him. Like all of his kind he had no sufficient consciousness of

sin. In his convicting sorrow the Saviour pleaded with him, but he would not yield to the persuasion of the Christ. Yet had not his duty come in the shape of a command, the young ruler with the strong motive of eternal life might have overcome his lust for gold, might have given his wealth to the poor; for large experience shows and proves that men are equal to great sacrifices if, in their willful pride, they believe that *in ways of their own*, by their own good works, they can deserve and buy the good-will of God.

In thinking of philosophic seekers after eternal life, whether of the Gentiles, of the Moslem, in the Middle Ages, or in our own day—men of many races and creeds, yet of one desire—there ever comes up the question as to the fate of the most interesting of them all. Twice he was silent before the Lord—at his question and at his command. Yet he went away in tears; and may he not have been in our Saviour's thoughts when, just afterward, he said, "With God all things are possible?"

In his thrice-told story instructive is the teaching of the power of the "besetting sin" to destroy the soul—a power so dangerous that Ruskin says: "It is always one sin, the favorite, which destroys souls. That conquered, all others fall with it; that victorious, all others follow with it." The rabbi would not free his heart from its "besetting sin," its lust for gold. His wealth was made to convict him of failure to deserve eternal life, but his love of money, which taught him his weakness, kept him weak. And the "besetting sin," even when it makes the sinner—the drunkard, the sensualist, the miser—

feel that he is in the grasp of evil, usually holds him there.

The Master seized the occasion to teach his disciples a lesson as to riches; for with amazement bordering on indignation they heard there was hardly a place in the kingdom for the rich. They took their Master's words without any limitations, but, though he set them right, yet as they traveled on "in the way" the behavior of the young man still fastened their thoughts on riches. His pitiable failure to make his title good to a reward startled and alarmed them; and by the law of association the solicitude about their own reward, which had before prompted the question, "Who shall be the greatest?" so came up again that Peter, beginning to look into their own title, thus stated their case: "We have left all," and asked, "What shall we have?" The answer of our Lord takes up almost all the rest of the chapter. It teaches that those who follow Christ for his own sake will have a reward, and that they who follow him only for the sake of a reward will have none. A parable enforcing these facts opens and closes with, "Many that are first shall be last, and that are last shall be first." Those critics who say those words are out of place miss the right stand-point; they do not get the plan of the house because they do not approach it in the right way. The Master, in reply to Peter, said that right service would be repaid a hundred-fold, and promised "in the regeneration" a great reward for the twelve. But if other and better motives were lacking the hope of a reward could not be accepted, and so with that promise there is a parable, warning them not to trust to conduct which



had no better motive. The parable is of great breadth, and the actors are many. It contains other truth besides its primary lesson; and lest that should be lost sight of those words come before it and come again at the end. They are the sum and title, the preface and conclusion, of the parable.

The farm-hands looked to have work all harvest-time, but were hired from day to day; some early in the morning, some at the third hour, some at the sixth, some at the ninth, some at the eleventh hour. At night they were all paid a day's wages, "every man a penny." The farmer's fine behavior to the late comers was worse than wasted on the early comers. They felt his large-heartedness to the others as a wrong to them. The farmer hires them no more. The others have work all through the harvest. "Many are called, few are chosen."

## CHAPTER XXV.

THE TWO LEADING IDEAS IN THE FIRST GOSPEL—  
SAINT MATTHEW AND SAINT JOHN.

BEFORE we “go up” to Jerusalem let us for the last time consider two leading ideas in Saint Matthew’s gospel. One is that Christ Jesus was “the substance of things hoped for” by the prophets, that in him was fulfilled all that the Hebrew religion promised, all its rites and ceremonies typified. That the presentation of this truth and fact would be characteristic of the earliest gospel is to be looked for. The official apostolic witness to the Messiah could have opened in no other way.\*

The other leading idea is that Jesus was the “Author and Finisher” of a perfect, universal, everlasting religion. The ever-increasing evidence in history of this truth and fact makes its presentation by the earliest evangelist, in his argument in proof of the divinity of our Lord, of ever-growing power to convince, persuade, and subdue.

The two ideas are seen when the genealogy is immediately followed by the incarnation and by the coming and worship of the representatives of the nations. They are seen in the place given in

\* I hold this to be as certain as any thing of the kind can be. It is, of course, decisive as to the priority of Saint Matthew’s gospel to that of Saint Mark; and I do not see how any one can be a Christian at heart and hold that Saint Mark’s gospel is earlier than Saint Matthew’s.

the construction of the gospel to the Sermon on the Mount, and they are inwrought into that sermon by the Lord himself. After the sermon both are seen in the correlative lessons in the first two miracles which Saint Matthew describes. In the second grand division—the charge to the twelve—the disciples are forbidden to go to the Samaritans or to the Greeks, but the spirit of the charge passing far beyond that restriction reaches to the farthest and the widest future. And, though evidently those ideas must everywhere come to light in the sayings and doings of our Lord, it is but just to mark how clearly Saint Matthew brings them out, and that he preserves the unity of his argument unbroken while writing of so many persons and things and so vividly *re-presenting* the varied life of the time.

The third grand division, from the charge to the twelve to the transfiguration, sets forth the contrast and conflict of true and false religion. Here the difficult purpose might be styled a philosophical one; yet steadily the stream flows on, the course of events is unrolled as it did unroll, and all is action, all is life. This part prepares for the accepted confession, which, with the transfiguration, is the central point in this gospel. After that great epoch in the visible and in the invisible world, in time and in eternity, the evangelist selects words of the Lawgiver which guard freedom and secure unity, that consecrate marriage and lay down its laws and limitations, that treat of riches and of rewards in his kingdom, of the rights and the duties of governments, of the immortality of the soul and of the future world. There Saint Matthew gives the last word to the Jews, and the word on Olivet,

in which the judgment of Judea, the age to come, and the end of the world are foretold. In the portraiture of the week of the passion those leading ideas are plain; and the inspired evangelist closes his manifold and mighty argument to prove that "the Son of David, the Son of Abraham," is Son of man and Son of God, with these words spoken by Jesus risen from the dead: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

For the common silence of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke as to the Judean ministry, and for their common silence as to the Lord's farewell to his disciples "in the upper chamber," reasons were given in *Thoughts on the Gospels*; and yet it may be well here to point out how much the division of the field of the ministry between the two apostles favored the unity of each of the two apostolic gospels. The great doctors of the law were in Jerusalem, its citizens were better trained and quicker than other Jews to apprehend the relations and bearings of new ideas, and was it not best that the ministry in Judea should be the field of the last of the gospels, as in it the teachings of Christ so accorded with the state of things there existing?

The last gospel opens with truths which presuppose and require that knowledge of our Lord which every Christian congregation had gained from the public reading of Saint Matthew's gospel—a knowledge enlarged by the like reading of the later gospels of Saint Mark and Saint Luke. And on comparing the first and the last of the gospels it is felt that the high note with which the last opens is in harmony with the Saviour's farewell in its four-

teenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters at its close; and that, in the first, the grand tone of blended truths and warnings in its fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters—the word on the mount—is deepened and prolonged by the last word of our Lord to the Jews, and by his word on the Mount of Olives; and that it was not possible so to have brought together in one gospel the denunciations and revelations of future judgments by the Judge of all the earth, delivered in the courts of the temple and on the Mount of Olives, with the tenderness of the Saviour's parting words to his own family in the seclusion of the "upper chamber" and the privacy of the night, as to give to each in the fullest degree its force and effect. To keep these separate and apart was the only course that suited the capacities and limitations of human minds and hearts; and this natural consequence of the agreement between the two apostles, like every thing else in the *Evangeliad*, was ordained of God, whose wisdom presided over that miracle of his mercy, his written word.

Each of the preordained apostolic evangelists was by nature great above the common lot of men. Saint Matthew's strong common sense was almost equal to genius, and it so interpenetrated and combined with his genius that his witness is of peculiar power over men; while the celestial witness of Saint John would have been suitable to angels only had not his genius been humanized by his intense humanity. Saint Matthew lays the deep foundation-stones of the holy temple; solid and vast the walls he builds, with pillared arches beneath which the great congregation is to worship; Saint John lifts the dome to the skies. In the gospel

of the one Jesus is holier, wiser, greater than the holiest, wisest, greatest of men, his words and acts ever more and more witnessing to his divinity ; the other at once reveals Christ Jesus as the Light when sun-measured years were not. In the earliest evangel Christ Jesus is seen more from the stand-point of time, in the last more from the stand-point of eternity ; and yet the earliest gospel is a fitting prelude to the opening melody of the last gospel, outflowing from eternity and overflowing the bounds of space and time. And yet, if such comparison be lawful, Saint John, more than any one of the holy evangelists, brings home to the heart the divine-human in Christ Jesus our Lord—as at the well of Samaria, the tomb of Lazarus. This is in keeping with the divinely planned construction of the Evangeliad, in which more of the divine in the Saviour is at first unveiled, and then more of the human ; and in time the last may become the first in Christian thought through the ever-increasing evidence and illumination of his divine nature in the human nature of our Redeemer and Lord.

Saint John begins with the Word, who was in the beginning with God. Saint Matthew begins with Jesus, born of the blessed Virgin in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king. The fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of the gospel according to Saint Matthew touch the soul of man ; the Church knows by heart the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of the gospel according to Saint John. The gospel of the first evangelist takes hold of men ; the gospel of the last evangelist takes hold of Christians. Saint Matthew speaks to the



human race ; Saint John, as if upborne on the air amid a throng of souls ascending to the skies, discourses with the voice of an angel.

In the controversy as to the inspiration of Holy Scripture—the great fact of our time—it cannot be too often insisted upon that the common and almost universal idea that the gospels are histories or biographies, and may therefore be judged by the rules appropriate to such, is a mistaken idea ; and that their inspired writers so prove the divinity of Jesus *by a selection from the multitude of things he said and did* that, believing on him, we might have life through his name.

The freedom of the holy evangelists as to times and places consequent upon their purpose almost necessitates freedom as to times and places in commenting upon their gospels ; and we now look back to some things that came earlier than the point of time we have reached, and forward to some that come later ; again considering the disciples' state of mind, and touching upon some of the events in that time between the transfiguration and the crucifixion—a time to which Saint Luke ascribes a mysterious character so related to our Lord's "going up" to Jerusalem to atone for the sin of the world as in some real sense to be a part thereof, though not in a sense that is clearly revealed.

There was a striking illustration of the weakness of the disciples at the foot of Mount Hermon. Raphael brought the miracle when the Saviour, granting the wretched father's prayer, drove the demon out of his child into comparison and contrast with

the glory of the transfiguration. He felt there was more than its name implies in the wonder in the holy mount; and by that contrast the dying painter made his unfinished picture great among paintings. Beholding that miracle the nine asked the Christ, "Why could not we cast him out?" And how fitting to all the circumstances the words, "*How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?*"—words said at a time when, rather than at almost any other, there would be that shade of sad, indignant emotion!

The father prayed, "Have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said unto him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, with tears, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*" That Saint Matthew leaves this out looks strange; but may it not have been because other words then so opened the heart of his Master, and because his soul was so entirely with him? But it would not have been Matthew-like to have passed over the question of the disciples and the answer to which Mount Hermon lent its grandeur.

Still going back—in those days when the ministry in Galilee more and more seemed a failure, there is the story of the tax, told only by Saint Matthew, who had been a collector of taxes.\* To the tax-man, asking if the Master would pay the tribute yearly called for from each Hebrew for the temple service, proudly and firmly Peter once would have said no; but the fisherman was so disheartened and dispirited

\* The second gospel is usually reserved as to what concerns Saint Peter; and Saint Luke may have had nothing to add.

by the change in the Galileans that he said yes. His Master aroused the better self of Peter by asking whether "the sons of kings paid tribute money;" yet, not to have paid the tax would have given the Pharisees a chance to set the people against Jesus; and his course teaches that, at times, rights may be foregone—a truth most readily accepted by those ready to make any sacrifice in maintaining rights they should not yield. Though the miracle was wrought in a way and manner especially fitted to strengthen the faith of the fisherman *it was a great miracle*. It revealed the omniscience of Christ Jesus as clearly as other of his miracles revealed his omnipotence. Still, it is not described; and therefore even orthodox writers have questioned whether a miracle then was wrought. They do not feel or understand that the silence of the inspired evangelist gives in its full strength his own conviction that no word of his Lord could fail.\* The well-timed miracle was not wrought for Peter's sake only, but to strengthen and encourage all the troubled, desponding disciples; and they all stood firm when the Galileans fell away.

Looking farther onward, Salome and her sons are seen. Coming just after one of the fullest and clearest of the Lord's prophetic revelations of his death, their behavior is very surprising; and still it is consistent with what is known of that family.† James and John are so frequently spoken of as "Zebedee's children" that their father must have

\* This matter is fully discussed in *Thoughts*, pp. 233-235, and the note.

† It is an undesigned coincidence that the love of Jesus for John, which goes far to account for the petition named only in the first gospel, is named only in the last gospel.

been a man of mark. In their boat were hired men. John had a house in Jerusalem, and to him the palace of the high-priest was open. These are signs in the family of those easy circumstances in which the ambition of a household readily awakens. The family was sure that the disciple "whom Jesus loved" would come to honor in the Messiah's kingdom; but John, warm-hearted and loyal, wanted James also to have a high place and told his mother so. Saint Mark says the request came from her sons, but the earlier gospel implies that all joined in it, for it states that the ten were angry with James and John and that our Lord spoke to the brothers. But it was Salome herself who said, "Grant that each of my sons"—evidently feeling that the place of one was secure—"may sit, the one on thy right hand, the other on thy left, when thou comest in thy kingdom." The fidelity of the wife, the love of the mother, almost sanctified her pleading for Zebedee's children. The soul of that noble woman shines out in the lives of James and John. There was faith even in her ambition. And Salome was a faithful woman. She was nigh the cross and early at the grave.

The anger of the ten at the plot of the two shows their feeling. But different psychologic problems present themselves in the disciples' states of mind. Conflicting trains of thought and feeling were struggling in their souls. One of these was related to an idea, common among the Jews, that the Messiah would come in the midst of strange and great calamities, yet would come to reign; and whenever they are told of what would befall their Master their ambition enkindles, as seen in Salome's children. Yet

when their Master asked James and John, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" they said, "We are able." His solemn prophetic announcement that it would be so they did not fully comprehend; but the sincerity and truth of their hearts were attested by the one to the end of his long life, and by the other in his martyrdom when "Herod Agrippa the king killed James, the brother of John, with the sword." A trustworthy tradition handed down to Clement of Alexandria tells that the heart of the prosecutor was so touched with the noble confession of the martyr that he besought his forgiveness, received from James the kiss of peace, confessed himself a Christian, was instantly hurried to the place of execution, and the two died together.

When told that their Master "would be killed and rise again" the disciples were troubled; but "they understood it not," says Saint Mark. Saint Luke says, "It was hid from them; they received it not, and they feared to ask him." That was true of Saint Matthew as of the rest; yet it looks as if he may have understood more than some of the others when, in a simple, touching way, he says, "They were *exceeding sorry*."

The problem of the character and conduct of the disciples has two sides to it. Their human nature came out in their ambition, their rivalries and strifes. It came out even at the solemn sacrament in the night of the betrayal of their Lord. But their real self was nobler. Their alternate falling and rising, soaring and sinking, are the signs of a new life that is breaking its bands. It was with them as with Lazarus when he hears the voice; but the grave-clothes fetter

and the light bewilders as he struggles to stand on his feet \* and face the sun.

The giving up by the twelve of their homes and their means of living were as nothing compared to the giving up of their hopes and dreams. Those for a time they could not give up. They were far from being apostles. That came afterward. And *then* Saint Peter, remembering his own darkness, the struggles within his own soul, his desertion and denial of his Master, said to those who crucified the Lord those marvelous words which otherwise he never could have said, "Ye denied the Holy One and Just, and killed the Prince of Life; but" (*καὶ νῦν, ἀδελφοί, οἶδα*) "*now, brethren, I know* that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."

In the period after the transfiguration in which our Lord said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished," he so looked forward to and prepared for his "going up to Jerusalem" as to give to that time a character of its own, as is certain from the language of Saint Luke; but, still, it would be a grievous error to suppose that he was not looking forward to that and preparing for it in all of his ministry. And it may have been to guard against this error that the veil is not more withdrawn from that time. To try to find out in the gospels, and especially in the last, traces of what is so veiled would lead us beyond our limits, and with little reasonable hope of success. And yet, while reflecting upon the raising of Lazarus, I was struck with its relation to our Lord's entry into the city as the Messiah,

\* As in the noble picture by Sebastiano del Piombo in the National Gallery in London.



and its leading on to his crucifixion. But, leaving this for my readers to think of, I pass on to the starting-point of *that going up to Jerusalem* for which God sent his Son into the world.

While Christ Jesus was at the feast of the dedication "the Jews sought to take him; but he escaped out of their hands, and went away beyond Jordan." There at the northern Bethany the sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to him that Lazarus, "his friend," was sick. "When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Then, after two days, he saith to his disciples, Lazarus is dead; nevertheless let us go to him." He raised Lazarus from the dead, and "many of the Jews believed on him, but some of them went their ways to the Pharisees and told them what things Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees from that day forth took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore went into a city called Ephraim"—evidently a place chosen for safety—"and there continued with his disciples." When "the passover was near at hand" he left Ephraim, and "journeying to Jerusalem he passed through the midst"—that is, along the frontiers—"of Samaria and Galilee," and came down into the Ghor or valley of the Jordan, traveling toward Jericho along the road on *the western side* of the river. At some point on the road the great section peculiar to Saint Luke's gospel ends. And somewhere on his way, before the cluster of cities in the rich and thickly peopled plain of Jericho came in sight, our Lord took his disciples "apart on the way" and said, "Behold! we go up to Jerusalem." He then told *of all that*

*was to befall him there.* He then told that he was to be delivered up to the Gentiles. And as he was about to speak of those things there was something in his bearing so awe-inspiring that Saint Peter, feeling that no words could tell it, says, "They were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them, and they were amazed, *and as they followed him they were afraid.*"

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE CHRIST GOES UP TO JERUSALEM—ENTRY INTO THE CITY—THE WITHERED TREE.

As signs on shore, hurry on board tell the voyagers down a river widening to the main they are drawing nigh the great city by the sea, so here the hastening on of the course of events and the changes taking place are signs of the end. Thrice, *and at two different times and places*, blind men hail Jesus as the Messiah; their eyes are opened; "all the people praise God;" yet he does not, as before, silence those to whom he has given sight or send them away; and *the three* rejoicing witnesses to his glory join the great procession that is moving on, on, toward the holy city.

Those who have witnessed a popular outbreak of local enthusiasm when strong passions were excited can best imagine the effect upon the thousands of Galilee of again meeting with the Prophet. All Israel wanted to know if Jesus were coming. "Many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?" (John xi, 55, 56.) Those Galileans knew he was on his way. The great attraction of the passover was in their company. They were going up to the assembling host with their own Prophet, the wonder of all Israel,

of whose name all the Jews, even those of the dispersion, had heard. Their early feeling toward him rekindled :

"Men met each other with erected look,  
Their steps were higher which they took ;  
Friends to congratulate their friends made haste,  
And long inveterate foes saluted as they passed."

Jerusalem was then the center of a people scattered in all the kingdoms of the Roman world and beyond its borders. To the passover, when the Saviour came to atone for the sin of man by "the exodus" he accomplished at Jerusalem, great was the concourse from many lands ; and so great the number of the pilgrims passing through the plain of Jericho that the tarrying of Jesus in the house of Zaccheus the publican did not separate him from the unbroken procession that was slowly climbing the wild ravine that leads from the plain to the heights of Jerusalem.

At Bethany, *in the district of Bethphage*,\* Jesus was near the city ; and for miles around the hamlets and houses were full. In each valley, under every group of trees, were encampments of neighbors, of friends, of families, and of those of the same tribe. The name of Lazarus was on every tongue, and when those men of Galilee brought the tidings that Jesus was coming to the passover a thrill of expectation ran through the city.

#### THE ENTRY OF THE CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM.

The multitude that was moving on from Bethphage toward town and temple waited while the Prophet

\* See Caspari, 189. Matt. xxi, 1, "They drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage ; " Mark xi, 1, "unto Bethphage and Bethany."

“sent forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat. . . . And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without, *in a place where two ways met.* . . . And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments upon him. . . . And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees and strewed them in the way. And *they that went before, and they that followed, cried,* saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!” (Mark xi, 1-10; Matt. xxi, 1-9.)

Christ Jesus then taking to himself a prophecy of the Messiah, so conformed his own doings to the prophecy *that he asserted power over prophecy itself.* And the spontaneous enthusiasm of the people then witnessed that his life had proved him to be the King whom the prophets foretold.

It concerned all mankind that in a public manner Jesus should clearly make it known that he was the Christ. That he did at a passover in the presence of the assembled nation; and from that hour there never has been a doubt that Jesus of Nazareth did declare that he was the Messiah of prophecy, and, *therefore,* they are not without sin who doubt the prophecy.

His entry into the capitol was that of the Prince of Peace. No trumpets blared. No banners waved. There were no ensigns of war. There was danger from the Romans, from the rulers of the Jews, from the passions of the multitude, yet peaceably in the

capital Jesus was proclaimed the Messiah in the name of David, the warrior-king, by the shouts of the people. Yet rightly he weighed the breath of popular favor. "He knew what was in man." He knew that had the exulting throng known his fixed purpose that accursed Romans, heretical Samaritans, Assyrians, and Egyptians should share in the blessings and honors of the children of Abraham they would have killed him within the temple gates. In vain they spread their garments in his path! In vain they strewed their branches of palm! He heard their hosannas as if he heard them not. To him their shouts are a funeral cry. When he came where Jerusalem was in full sight he wept over the city; and no doubt he then recalled to mind the lament uttered before and afterward,\* "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem!"

#### THE WITHERING OF THE FIG-TREE.

The inspired evangelist, who subordinated to relations of a higher order those of time in joining the authority Christ Jesus put forth over the temple with his entry into the city as king, joined the intimation of danger in his going out of the city at night † to the startling omen in the withering of the fig-tree. And he tells all it was given him to tell of that great wonder. Divine power withered the tree, and it was also divine power that made the evangelists

\* Deep and lasting emotions find form and utterance in a poetry of the heart that often comes to the lips, oftener to the mind. The Saviour's lament over Jerusalem is Hebrew poetry. The disciples heard it twice. It would not have been strange had they heard it at other times also.

† "At night Jesus went out and lodged in Bethany."



leave the meaning of the symbol to the illustration of time.

Weak the notion that out of traditionary misrecollection of a parable about a fig-tree grew the record of that self-authenticating sign! Wicked the charge that it was a sin to kill that way-side tree! as if our Lord, whose unreprieved will sends cyclones through uprooted forests, might not, for a use and purpose commensurate with his glory as the Lord of history, do what a wood-cutter does when for fire-wood he hews down a tree! Unreasoning the cavil that our Lord did not in his usual manner explain the act, when all was unusual and the future was to reveal the dread import of the prophetic sign! Or that the words on faith and prayer are not suited to the marvel! The disciples knew not the dangers that day awaiting their Master, and on the symbol they looked with uncomprehending eyes. Their simple, child-like natures were impressed *only with the thought of power*. Wondering they cried, "How soon is the fig-tree withered away!" The thought of the power of their Lord they were in need of then; and their Master, taking them as they were, and suiting his words to the time, spoke to them of faith and prayer words they had heard before, yet suiting the morning of the day when he was to denounce and defy the rulers of the nation in their stronghold and center of power. And such the timely power of the miracle and of his words that his disciples, who deserted him before the week was done, stood firm in the terrible conflict of that day.

On that morning, and with the dread import of the prophetic symbol in his thoughts, our Saviour joined

to the duty of faith and prayer that of forgiving the wrong-doing of brethren. Those words are not given by Saint Matthew, but his gospel had taught that lesson; and his passing over those words at such a time accords as well with the historic quality of his mind as their recital by Saint Mark with his way of filling out the record of the earlier evangelist.

The withering of the fig-tree is unlike our Saviour's other miracles. This is often said as a cavil, yet such is the fact. The withering of the fig-tree opens a new self-revelation of the Eternal Word, even that of the office-work of Christ Jesus as Judge of the quick and the dead. And as the evil treatment he received from an evil generation becomes more and more like the treatment of the prophets whom their fathers murdered, more and more he resembles the prophets of old. His words are more colored, like theirs, with rich and gorgeous hues. And all of their traits, from the meekness of the murdered Abel to the sternness of Malachi, in him now blend and burn! The fires in the hearts of his messengers who died for him of old are now seen to have been sparks of his own being. And in commanding power, in awful sternness and righteous indignation, he surpasses all the prophets he sent before him.

The barren tree covered with leaves was a symbol of the Jewish nation, barren of mercy and love, rich in rites and ceremonial observances. The nation was to be withered like the withered tree. The flames of Jerusalem were to light up the emblem. The withered tree now speaks. On a mound in a solitary waste against a lurid sky it lifts its blackened branches vocal with the wail of a nation's despair.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE DEPUTATION FROM THE SANHEDRIN.

THE purification of the temple \* was on Monday ; but Saint Matthew joins it with the entry on Palm Sunday, as it was our Lord's continuing assertion of his sovereignty which then reached its height. The purifying of the holy place was the great event on Monday, though "the blind and the lame came to Jesus in the temple, and he healed them." "The chief priests and the scribes" and the elders "of the people" "were sore displeased" by all those things ; yet, confounded by the shouts of the people at the return of the banished fugitive, they "feared," they "could not find what they might do," and only complained of "the children's crying in the temple, Hosanna to the Son of David." Then, in a meeting of the Sanhedrin, held probably at night, they agreed upon a course which made Tuesday of passion week so eminently historic that here let us glance at the previous history of Israel and its politics at that time.

The Hebrew state, patriarchal in its origin, became a commonwealth after the exode, and later on a limited monarchy. But there was a *noblesse* before the anointing of Saul, its first king. This is proved by the

\* That our Lord, having purged the temple at the beginning of his mission, should have repeated this at its close is almost a thing of course. As to this, see the note on "Mary, the Sister of Lazarus," in the index to *Thoughts*, p. 373.

titles, "Chief of the House," "Heads of the Thousands of Israel," "Princes of the Tribes." Stronger grew the aristocratic element in the time of the kings, as proved by the titles "Royal Counselor," "Master of the Household," "Keeper of the Robes," "Life-Guards of the King." The princes of the tribes outlived the overthrow of the monarchy, for they are spoken of after the exile. And, though the Jews were subject to Persians, Greeks, and Romans in turn, their ecclesiastics were still an aristocracy with secular and sacred powers. They ruled their own people in the Sanhedrin, the appellate court and highest tribunal of the nation.

The rest of the Hebrews were neither slaves nor serfs nor a populace. In the ancient world, to them only can the name of a people in its fullest sense be given. In the commonwealth, for a time, they occasionally assembled in a national council; afterward they were present by their representatives, and to them the action of the council was submitted. But long before the Christian era the nobles encroached upon the rights and powers of the people; and both nobles and people became subject to foreign dominion; yet, so far as their own institutions were concerned, the children of Abraham at all times were free citizens. And, looking at the history of the Hebrews as a whole, they were the most civilized of the ancients, if safety from oppression on the one hand and from anarchy on the other be a measure of civilization. Yet the Jewish race was so disliked and scorned by the ancients, and has been so hated by the moderns, that full justice has not been done to the fine qualities of this finest of all races. Endowed

with unequalled patriotic endurance, after they looked with a terrific courage of despair on their burning temple, and after Hadrian drove them out of their country, the children of Abraham carried their country with them by every-where carrying its language, its customs, and its law.

The national parliament of that imperishable people condemned the Son of God. Hateful the name of that evil council! Yet there have been scholars, nobles, and priests like those in that Sanhedrin. The Goth who drew his dagger when told of the wrongs of Jesus, crying, "Had I been there!" *was there* in the person of the prince of the tribe. And long afterward (in A. D. 1415), in the spirit of that Sanhedrin, the nobles, scholars, and priests of the council at Constance murdered John Huss and Jerome of Prague, who for Christ's sake died the death of martyrs.

Had that accursed Sanhedrin in Jerusalem met ten years earlier or ten years later it would have been forgotten. And could we now call up the ways of life of those senators, in the city, in their country houses, teaching their children, training their horses, caring for their vineyards; could we hear them debate, go with them in travels to Egypt, to the East and the Far-East, in embassies to Rome, we should find their lives, motives, and plans much like those of nobles and ecclesiastics of wealth, ambition, and high in office *now*. Annas, so adroit a politician that after the Romans took from him the office of high-priest he put into it four or five of his sons and Caiaphas, his son-in-law—Annas, whom the Jews held to be the high-priest (*de jure*) of right, that bad old man, was the master-spirit of that evil council. In it there

were men of divers characters, and numerous enough for a wide play of the passions. Comparatively young men, early raised to honor by talent and energy; old men of iron will, good in counsel, few of words; princes from their strongholds among the hills; rich burghers from towns; scribes of more influence than the soldiers, and priests of stronger will than the nobles, were there. With solemn awe I think of that Sanhedrin. In the shrouding darkness its scholars, nobles, and priests cannot be distinguished. Few the names known of those whose sin is known to all. Their prayer to be forgotten was heard. Their tombs will never give up their secret.

On Tuesday a deputation went forth from that Sanhedrin. And as scholars, ignorant of public affairs, question the possibility of a deputation to Jesus at so late a day, let us here consider the previous facts which bear upon the alleged impossibility. When, at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus cured "a certain man which had an infirmity thirty and eight years," \* the Jews sought to slay him because he did that on the Sabbath. When Jesus said to them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," they sought the more to kill him. After those things Jesus "would not walk in Jewry;" † yet he went up to Jerusalem unto the feast of tabernacles, and taught in the temple. The rulers sought to take him, but "no man laid hands on him, ‡ because his hour was not yet come." On the last great day of the feast § "the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him;" || "but there was a division

\* John v, 5.

† John vii, 1.

‡ John vii, 10, 14, 30.

§ John vii, 37.

|| John vii, 32.



among the people ;” \* and the officers made return that “ never man spake like this man.” † Thereupon the council of his enemies broke up in confusion, “ and every man went unto his own house.” ‡ After that, when Jesus said, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am,” § the Jews took up stones to stone him ; || and yet, although the rulers had agreed that if any man confessed that Jesus was Christ he should be put out of the synagogue, ¶ many believed on him and said, “ When Christ cometh will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done ? ” \*\* “ And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad ; while others said, Can a devil open the eyes of the blind ? ” ††

Such was the state of affairs in the city when, at the feast of the dedication, Jesus having said, “ I and my Father are one,” the Jews again took up stones to stone him. Then he went far away to the northern Bethany, and “ there he abode.” Called from thence by Mary and Martha, he raised Lazarus from the dead. In a *strategical* point of view (if it be permissible here to use that word) it is remarkable how that miracle opened the way for that entry into Jerusalem which was the open proclamation to Israel that Jesus was the Messiah. That brought on *the end*, as foreseen by Christ Jesus, whose last “ going up ” to Jerusalem was *to meet the end*.

The family of Bethany was of the gentry. “ Many came ” to Mary in her trouble, and “ when they saw what Jesus did, believed on him ; but some went

\* John vii, 43.

† John vii, 46.

‡ John vii, 53.

§ John viii, 58.

|| John x, 30, 31.

¶ John ix, 22.

\*\* John vii, 31.

†† John x, 20, 21.

their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what Jesus had done.”\* Then, to use a political term exactly descriptive, his enemies held a *caucus*. Saint John calls it a Sanhedrin, but leaves off the article “which in twenty cases he left off in this one only,” and this, with his unusual term for the calling of the council together (*συνήγαγον*), makes it certain that it was a *packed* assembly, and not a full and legal meeting. The conspirators (*συνεβουλεύσαντο*) sought to take counsel together in secret. Their discussions and doings were of great import and of lasting consequence, and every word of the brief record is significant: “The chief priests and the Pharisees said, What † are we doing? For ‡ *this man* doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all will believe on him; and the Romans will come and take away our place and our nation. And Caiaphas” § (the one selected), “the high-priest that same year,” put forward instead of Annas, “said unto them, *You* know nothing at all” || (as compared to Annas and himself), “nor consider,” ¶ reason out, “that it is for your interest\*\* that this one, *a man*, †† should die a lingering death ‡‡ for the people, and that the whole nation” (*you*, its rulers, included) “perish not. And this he spake not of himself, but being high-priest that year” (of atonement), “he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

\* John xi, 45, 46, (ἃ ἐποίησεν).

† Οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος.

|| Γμεῖς, *you*, is emphatic.

\*\* Ὅτι συμφέρει ἡμῖν.

† Τι ποιοῦμεν.

§ Εἰς δε τις ἐξ αὐτῶν.

¶ Διαλογιζέσθε.

†† Εἰς ἄνθρωπος.

‡‡ Ἀποθάνη.

*Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Therefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples."* \*

More than once the Jews of Jerusalem had sought to kill Jesus; but, unstable in love or hate, the people have sudden inexplicable alternations of feeling and passion, and when the Prophet, having been away for a time, suddenly and openly came to the passover, the heart of the city was so touched and moved by the enthusiasm of his Galilean followers that the conspirators in the Sanhedrin were astounded and perplexed. Only a little while before that "many of the chief rulers believed on Jesus, but they did not confess him, because they loved the praise of men;" † their unwillingness to incur the moral responsibility of putting Jesus to death was not lessened by the unexpected and dangerous change of feeling in the city; and therefore the conspirators felt that it would be difficult to secure the wished-for concert of action. Deliberative bodies do not give a prompt and full assent to decisive action of a momentous kind. It takes tact and time to bring even a clear majority to act together in extreme cases. Some of the members of the Sanhedrin were not unfavorable to Jesus, and there was just that state of affairs when some one was sure to rise up and suggest a deputation. That suited the prudent and the timid; and sagacious old Annas persuaded the violent to consent to the motion, foreseeing that the last

\* John xi, 47-54.

† John xii, 42, 43.

effort of the moderate party would come to nothing, and violent measures would then be sure to prevail.

The committee, made up of chief priests, scribes, and elders, fully represented the great council of the nation. And in the life of our Lord few hours were of more meaning; for only history, in its full compass in time to come, as well as in time past, can bring out the full significance of the conference then held in the temple courts. That seeming conference and real conflict was prophetic and representative of the unceasing war between the god of this world and the Son of God which is the key to history. In this *μαχη αθανατος*, this everlasting war, whatever has been and whatever is has a part—the Church, the State, science and letters, music, architecture, and art, agriculture and commerce, slavery and freedom, peace and war. And as all that comes of a march, a siege, a retreat, a victory, or a defeat cannot be apprehended while a war between two nations is going on, so all the bearings and effects of no one thing in this great war can yet be known. In one's own life-battle who knows or who can know just what is or is to be the full outcome for good or ill of each thing, or, indeed, of any thing? Nor can the like be known in the greater war. When the Roman world was swept away who could then foreknow that God was clearing the ground—destroying that he might rebuild? And—passing by questions that reach to the inmost life of Christendom, and looking at things more within our comprehension—who can know the good or ill that has come from the art of printing or from the exiling of Puritans and Huguenots who at Lexington

and Yorktown rekindled the yet burning conflagration of the French Revolution? No one can know all the numberless and dissimilar effects of these and of other trains of events and causes of change, all the ways and to what extent they serve the will of one or the other of the great contending powers. We know, or seem to know, a little of what has been and is, when, lo, the breaking of another seal! And if with fear and hope we dimly see into the divinely guided course of this irrepressible conflict of good and evil, it is only through enlightenment from the words of Him who "came to kindle a fire in the earth."

The poetry and rhetoric of Eastern men are diffuse and Ossianic; yet they can speak with quick directness and plainness and give in a few words the force and sum of long orations. The deputation from the Sanhedrin set forth their whole case in the question, "By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?" In those few words they assume that their own rightful authority is too well known to be questioned. They define their own position. In the most politic, effective, yet least offensive way they question that of Jesus. They set forth their whole claim and argument, at once opening and closing the debate on their side. Coming directly to the point, they meant to ask, and in effect did ask, whether Jesus would own and submit to the authority of the ecclesiastical council over his conscience; and the conspirators thought that if he would not own that authority his refusal must open the way for an appeal to the reverence of the people for the Sanhedrin. The question, suiting their

evil design and covering their whole case, is a striking instance of condensed and well-directed power. The answer is still more so. In raising the question whether Jesus was acting with due regard to the supreme authority of the Sanhedrin in religious matters its committee assumed the right and the power to say what truth is, and how, when, where, and by whom the truth may be preached; and when Christ Jesus asked if John's baptism was from heaven or from among men he cut the ground from beneath their feet. They would not confess that John was sent from God, for he bore witness that Jesus was the Messiah; and yet they were afraid to deny John in the hearing of the people with whom that victim of a tyrant was a martyr of liberty and "a prophet indeed." They were compelled to say, "We cannot tell." This was, in fact, an open surrender of all they had claimed. And then Jesus, having made their own lips give a sufficient reason for his own denial of the authority of the ecclesiastic tribunal to sit in judgment on his conscience, followed up his victory, and, standing on the ground taken from them, he said, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

A prophet claims authority from above; and again and again in Jerusalem Jesus had put forth that claim. Carrying it far beyond that of Moses and the prophets, he said, "My Father and I are one. The works he gave me to finish, the same works I do. Whatsoever thing he doeth, those also doeth the Son likewise, that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." For such sayings the Jews had sought his life; so that, with whatever object the members of the great council came, it was not to find



out that which is on the face of their inquiry. And it is shown by the whole tenor of their proceedings that if there were any in the deputation who in their secret minds were friendly to Jesus they were overruled and circumvented by the more numerous and more politic party of Annas and Caiaphas.

In thinking of this conference it is ever to be kept in mind that no ecclesiastical authority has had more imposing or higher sanction than that of the Jews. On that very day our Lord said to the people, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." And yet the answer of Jesus to the question of the Sanhedrin disowned its supreme authority over the conscience. In circumstances which give it great plainness and force our Lord affirmed that a man's conscience is his own conscience. And if the conscience, into which shineth the true Light who enlighteneth every man—if the conscience, which should rule and guide the whole man, be in bonds, a man can no longer do as he ought, for then the will of another is in the place of his own free will.

A great change in human affairs, both social and religious, was a direct result of the truth as to the rightful freedom of conscience which stands out in the conference between Christ Jesus and the representatives of the Sanhedrin. From immemorial time and among all tribes and nations, whether savage or civilized, heathen or Christianized, the enslavement of the conscience has so been brought about by a claim of superhuman powers and rights successfully put forth that the many have become servants or slaves of the few. As of old in India and in Egypt, so in Chris-

tianized kingdoms, society has been molded by priests allied with nobles, or by classes wielding similar powers, each aiding the intent and effort of the other to perfect and uphold its rule; and these privileged orders maintain themselves by impressing upon others the belief that their powers and privileges are divinely conferred. In the case of the Sanhedrin our Lord, by his example and his word, revealed that the conscience is the servant only of God, and is not subject to the will of men. Through his words this truth, which reaches to social as well as religious institutions, has an indestructible life. If it be crucified it will rise again. If buried in the sepulcher the stone will be rolled away and the keepers become as dead men.

Men trained in the contests of the bar and the forum will readily understand how much was contained in the brief pleadings in the temple courts; and from the quick overthrow of those astute politicians, scholars, and priests, from the ensuing overthrow of the courtiers of Herod, and later of the Sadducees, they may gain a more vivid idea of the mental power of the Prophet of Nazareth than is vouchsafed to others. But every one must be struck with the instant and thorough triumph of Jesus over the able assailants who came in turn to overawe or cajole or discomfort him. So complete and so apparent to all the people was his triumph over the committee of the Sanhedrin that it was safe for Jesus to take up his parable against them. So demoralized were they that from their own lips he brought out a recognition and approval of its lesson, and then pointed that lesson at the nation of which they were the representa-

tives. Again he made them own the like truth in another parable; and then, as before, stating that truth in plain words, he told them, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Then to those doctors of the law he put this question, which contained a volume of suggestion and argument: "Did ye never read that the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?"

They who conjecture that the third parable was uttered at another time and place strangely overlook the evident fact that the three parables are a closely related series of unfolding truths. The horizon of the second parable is wider than that of the first. The horizon of the third is wider than that of the second. The first parable is of the time before Christ. The time of the second is when Christ was on the earth. The time of the last is farther on. That last parable foreshadows persecutions by the Jews, the burning of Jerusalem, and the consequences of the proclamation of the Gospel. And the divine foresight in the three parables is hardly more manifestly superhuman than the divine compression into a hand-breadth of the future of the Jews and of the world. And while the three parables give a panoramic view of many ages they are so wrought out that in them every one may find lessons for himself. Each one may ask himself if he love not his farm or his business too well, or if he be not of those who come to the wedding-feast not having on a wedding-garment.

There was a delusive show of conciliation in the

coming of the deputation from the Sanhedrin ; and in its imposing presence a timid man might have faltered, a weak man have fallen ; but in that great crisis the boldness of Jesus, and especially in his last words to the people that day, was in such contrast with his usual prudence and caution at other times that, if reverence did not forbid, we might feel that a milder or a less open course had been better. But history hushes the thought with the warning that evil priests and nobles never give up what they can keep ; that their conscience is so dead that they murder the saints who trust\* them. By the quiet shore of Gennesaret the Spirit may lead his prophets for a while, but there comes the hour when he drives them irresistibly to face his enemies ; and when it is treason to the truth in Christ for them to flee they “are in the temple on the great day of the feast.”

Goodly citizens of sober mien, upholders of the established order of things, haughty patricians, counting for good works the crimes that made sure their privileges, priests in whose faces there was nothing of “humanity’s sweet melting grace” could not abide the Prophet. To them good not for their profit was evil. That one not of their own order should presume to do any thing for the truth seemed to take away from their heritage of honor and power ; and, not able to enforce silence upon Christ Jesus, they conspired against him, and thought they killed him.

The hard realities of life teach the people the worth

\* John Huss, who was thrown into a dungeon and then burned at the stake, went to Constance with a safe-conduct from the emperor.

of kindness. Their souls are responsive to words of truth. They count John "a prophet indeed." For a time they hear the Christ gladly. But they are swayed by authority. Their masters have dominion over their fickle natures, and while the people are pleased with a prophet's denunciation of oppressive and unjust privileges there is in their own hearts the selfishness which gave rise to those very wrongs from which they suffer. The people are so wanting in a self-forgetting charity that would share all social burdens, so wanting in the righteousness that will not consent to wrong, that if they had the power they would fashion for their own pleasure and profit customs, institutions, and laws the same in spirit, if not in form, as those they now feel to be grievances. They are pleased with flattery; and when the Prophet strikes at their sins they strike at him; and at last he becomes "a reproach of men, despised of the people."

These ominous words, which make our blood run cold, were said by one of our foremost statesmen: "There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby nations can be saved but the name of Democracy." Over against these words we set those of a wiser thinker: "Democracy may be no more the object of Heaven's care than monarchy. It may be that both are among the idols to be demolished. It may be that our American experiment is for a warning example. Nothing but deep initiation into the spirit of the Bible can enable us to form the faintest idea as to what historical events belong most to the divine plan, have most relation to the kingdom of the eternities." That is true; for all that can be

truly known of history, or foreknown of the future, is through a knowledge of the hidden springs and laws of human destiny as brought to light in their historic revelation in the Bible. In the clear, and it may be the prophetic, mirror of the gospels the aristocracy and the people are seen as they are. The rulers condemn Christ Jesus to death; the people answer and say, "His blood be upon us and our children."



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF GOVERNMENTS—OF THE LIFE HEREAFTER—AND OF  
THE SCRIPTURES.

WITH sharp and sudden anger the more daring of the conspirators would have laid hands on Jesus—which would have been in keeping with the lawlessness of the time and their sense of power—but they were held back by the more cautious, who “feared the multitude because they took Jesus for a prophet;” and the conspirators “left him and went their way.” Thus Saint Mark; but from Saint Matthew we learn that while the leaders and the main force go, others stay. The unity of the scene is not wholly broken up. The leaders and those with them eye from a distance, or wait expectant in a convenient chamber of the temple, while a few listen and watch. After a little these report that Jesus had spoken of a king who burned a city; and a new plan was started, all taking counsel together how to “entangle” the Prophet “in his talk.” Their plot is clear in Saint Matthew’s gospel; and Saint Luke states it exactly: “They sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.”

Courtiers, ready and willing to join with the Pharisees, aristocrats like themselves, to deceive and betray the Man of the people, had come up from Tiberias

with Herod Antipas ; and as Jesus had healed Joanna, the wife of Chuza, steward of Herod's palace, they thought they could pass themselves off as having formed a favorable opinion of Jesus in Galilee. The chief priests and elders kept out of sight, but sent some of their young disciples ; and for the carrying out the joint-plan if successful, the way was open, for the Roman governor had come up from Cesarea by the sea.

The well-contrived plot was managed well. The question of the Herodians was one of the burning questions of the day. It came naturally from men of their politics ; and their show of courtesy seemed as natural when they said, " Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou ? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar ? " If he answered no, the Herodians were to accuse him to the governor ; if he answered yes, the Pharisees were to accuse him to the people. " Perceiving their wickedness, Jesus called for tribute money, and asking, Whose is this image and superscription ? he said, Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. " And thus, by pointing to the fact that by their acceptance and use of the Roman coinage *all the Jews* acknowledge the sovereignty of the Romans, he instantly and thoroughly defeated the conspiracy.

That word of our Lord defined his position toward all governments. Said for all time, it is much needed in our time, when at every fireside discussion as to rights and power is going on, when there is little rest in any form of government, and when not dynasties so much as principles are in doubt, when it is not so

much who shall be the master as what shall be the mastery. That word of our Lord recognized the Roman government as of lawful authority only three days before the Romans crucified him. Yet the Romans had won dominion over Judea by the sword. And if the preservation of national institutions, if the weight of present and the dread of future evils justify rebellion, the Jews might have rightfully rebelled. And it was in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar that our Lord laid down his law, and in the reign of Nero that he gave the same command, saying by the lips of his apostle, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God."

The war of the North American colonies with the king of Great Britain was not a rebellion. The king violated the charters of the governments of the colonies, and the wronged governments withstood the wrong. People who have to decide between the conflicting claims of two authorities certainly do not, in all cases, merit the name of traitors or of rebels; and if there were to be—which God forbid—a collision between the executive and the legislative powers established by the Constitution of the United States, or between the nation and a State government, the adherents of either could not be rightly termed rebels while the question between them was being decided by arbitration of battle.

But to rebellion, strictly and truly such, a bound was set when *it was written*, "The powers that be are ordained." And though a people or a race be enslaved and wronged, they are to wait God's time and way of

deliverance. And if the chains without are symbols of chains within, force is powerless to set free. Only the redeeming Christ can do for such what they cannot do for themselves.

The law of our Lord does not forbid a people to define, limit, or peacefully to change the administration or the powers of the government. His law does not interfere with the duty of a free people to keep their freedom. Patriotic self-devotion does honor to a people, even when it cannot save its liberty. But if the Sovereign Disposer has decreed that its freedom shall pass away, and his decree is stamped upon its coin, then his will is submission and peace. Thus the cruelties of the victors and the sufferings of the vanquished are softened, the fallen may be lifted up, what was lost be quietly regained, and the children of the conquered and of the conquerors be made one by a common language, common laws, at the altar and at the grave—as in England after it passed under the Norman yoke, and in France and other kingdoms that grew up out of the ruins of the Roman Empire.

At the time when our Lord said, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," the Romans allowed their own religions to conquered nations, and his words, "Render unto God the things that are God's," limiting the law of obedience to the State, provide for what came later, when the Romans persecuted Christians. That evil example was copied by Christianized governments; yet neither the Church nor the State can rightly restrict the "inalienable right" of religious freedom. And when the State or the Church try to bind the conscience by penal enactments, then resistance to such tyranny is obedi-

ence to God—as in the glorious war of the heroic Maccabees with Antiochus, or in that of the Dutch with Philip of Spain. And those words of the Law-giver *made his law complete*; for there was no need to say that if the two came in conflict the law of God was higher than the law of man.

#### OF THE LIFE HEREAFTER.

Then from the Sadducees there came a question in which an argument against belief in a future life was involved. Sagaciously those agnostics rested their case upon the assumption that the phenomena of this world of the senses re-appear in the world of spirits. This is a common assumption. The “poor Indian,” who dreams of

“Some safer world in depths of woods embraced,  
Some happier island in the watery waste,  
And thinks, admitted to the equal sky,  
His faithful dog will bear him company,”

in his dreaming is not alone. The world keeps him company in fancies essentially the same; and in this earthly dreaming about unearthly things some now find a reason for rejecting belief in the hereafter, saying, with the old Sadducees, “There is neither angel nor spirit;” soul and body perish together; and there can be no resurrection of the dead.

Astutely choosing the human tie more likely than any other to bind in the hereafter, those high-bred agnostics, with a scarcely perceptible curl of the lip, put forth their case. It was a ludicrous case; yet in it there was a well-devised and strong argument, though somewhat of its force is now hidden by its antique and Jewish garb. The Prophet, by reveal-

ing that those who go from this life, "like the angels," neither marry nor are given in marriage, set their case aside. But, while this should have put an end to the common error that the life beyond is a repetition of the life on earth, still that error has not passed away. There still are the ever-varying forms of earthly fancies as to the future world—though more of the world of spirits is known to the unlettered man who died this morning than to the wisest of living men.

And what proof did the Giver and Lord of life offer to those agnostics of the immortality of the soul? How did he answer the question asked so long before, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Did he prove the immortality of the soul by the soul's longings, by its thoughts that wander through eternity, by hints in nature, by the injustice and the wrongs not righted in this life? Of any such reasoning he made no use; and while in it there may be infinitesimal evidence of immortality, yet of this all the little since the unsatisfying speculations of Plato and of Cicero is inconclusive and in vain. Such thoughts may please, perhaps they may persuade, when death is far away and the breath of autumn stirs the colored leaves of the maples and the slowly sinking sun floods with yellow light the vale below the open casement; but when the corpse lies white and cold in the still chamber, or when the earth rattles on the coffin-lid, all such speculation is stricken dumb by the logic of despair.

To the Sadducees Christ Jesus proved the immortality of the soul only by the revelation of it in the word of God. That truth was inwrought into his Scriptures from their beginning. It is implied in



these words of God to Cain: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Then—as now in common speech—the blood stood for the life; and the meaning was clear to the murderer, for "in the earliest experience of mankind death, though an awfully strange and fearful event, was not regarded as a cessation or discontinuance of being."\* The heretical, apostate nations forgot the divine origin of their belief in a future life, yet, handed down from sire to son, that belief every-where survived; and this explains the fact that all the tribes of the earth believe in a future life, though no living man can verify that belief.

Jacob was the heir of the religion of Enoch and of Abel; and when the patriarch and his household went down to dwell in Egypt they carried with them the primeval and patriarchal belief in a future world. But had they known nothing of it before, in Egypt they must have welcomed a truth so accordant with the aspirations and hopes of their souls. It is historically impossible that when the Israelites came up out of Egypt they knew it not, believed it not. And yet in the last century an English prelate labored with a superabundance of learning to prove that the books of Moses know nothing of any life after death. Infidels now make the same assertion; yet the Lord Jesus proved the immortality of the soul from the books of Moses.

\* Dr. Lewis says that "the allusion to the blood of Abel (Heb. xii, 24) has been supposed to intimate the blood of Abel's sacrifice, but the more direct parallelism is with the voice spoken of as crying from the earth. The words *κρείττονα λαλοῦντι* are best rendered *speakeeth stronger, louder*—the blood of Christ cries louder for mercy than the blood of Abel did for vengeance."

By his use of Holy Scripture our Lord conveys something of his own way of thinking of every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God, as by his example he impresses us with his own trust in his own Father. But if any one conjectures that our Lord was the first to see proof in the words, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," that the patriarchs still lived, he underrates and undervalues the spiritual insight of the spiritually-minded of Abraham's race. And when our Lord said to the Sadducees, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures," his words imply that the truth they denied is every-where in those Scriptures. His proof of immortality carries with it the idea that the fact is presupposed in a revelation of himself from God to man. And may it not be said that here the course of our Lord in passing over plainer evidences *may* somewhat resemble that of one who, challenged to prove the being of God, passing by his excellent high works, the changing seasons or the host of heaven, takes up a pebble at his feet and from it proves the glory of the Creator of all the worlds?

That Moses was not commanded to set before the Israelites the rewards or the retributions of a future world, in order to encourage in duty or to hold back from sin, is made a charge against the claims of the books of Moses by Sadducees *now*; and yet they charge Christianity with appealing to selfishness by its promises of future rewards, its threatenings of future retribution. Therefore, to be consistent they should confess the spirituality of the Old Testament, whose incentive to righteousness is in the union of the soul with God—that life in him which, under the name of

faith, in the New Testament Scriptures, is "the substance of things hoped for." For the Hebrew Scriptures bear full witness to the possible union of the soul with God. The pious in Israel gave so noble an utterance to the deepest, highest, truest sense of that union that their hymns and prayers are daily, hourly repeated by Christians.\* This belief is no stronger in Christians, although our Lord in himself revealed the perfect union of God and man—a union by which, in his answer to the Sadducees, he proved the immortality of the soul.

Thus the books of Moses come into line with the Christian Scriptures; and yet their recognition of a union of God in which there is assurance of immortality does not fully account for their silence as to the rewards or the retributions of a future world. As to that, it was said to me, by one who cared not to be known in the world of letters yet never wearied of searching into ancient thought, that in Moses's time such was the belief in the transmigration of souls that, had the lawgiver revealed any thing whatever concerning the future life, it would have been strangely, grossly perverted by the Israelites to their exceeding harm. And save belief in the superhuman and in some form of existence after death, no belief has

\* Well was it said of the psalms only, "They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promises joys of that world which is to come, all good necessarily to be either known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth."—*Hooker*.

been so wide-spread as that in the transmigration of souls. *This is true even to-day, and historic memory runneth not to the time when it was not true.*

## OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES.

Our Lord freely permitted the approach of friends or foes ; and in seemingly casual interviews he quickly cleared up many things in the wide fields of social, moral, and religious truth. On the Wednesday of passion week the plot of the Herodians led him to define the rights of governments ; the airy levity of the Sadducees led to a revelation of immortality in which he pointed out that truth in the books of Moses, and also corrected the human error as to the future state ; and then a lawyer's hostile curiosity led to his summing up all the law and all the prophets in one sentence.

To Jesus Christ the Hebrew Scriptures told only of love to God and of love to man ; yet they are often decried as crude and incoherent, as harsh and vindictive. But the hour is nigh—indeed, it is already here—when infidels will claim that the marvelous teaching of Jesus is to be accounted for by his insight into the Hebrew Scriptures ; and by the fact that, as Shakespeare is unequaled among dramatists, so he had no equal among the great seers and diviners of the most spiritual of all races. Yet, in the end, all such unhallowed efforts to prove in Jesus any dependence upon or likeness to any order of men will deepen and strengthen the wise conviction of all his children that his insight into the depths, his enlargement of the scope of the truths declared of old in the word of God, prove that he himself is “the Author and

Finisher" of the faith; that he himself is the Light who enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.

The lawyer, hearing Jesus reasoning with his foes, and perceiving that he answered well, came, according to Saint Mark, and asked him, "What is the first commandment of all?" But according to Saint Matthew he came "tempting" him. Some say that the word "tempting" here stands for a well-meant inquiry! Others say there were two lawyers! But is it an uncommon occurrence that with lively curiosity a strongly prejudiced man meets a distinguished person, and the mysterious power of a noble character, or some coincidence of feeling or thought, or some original and striking word, melting the unfriendly, unsympathetic coldness, converts an enemy into an admiring friend? The question was often discussed in the schools of the day; and the lawyer's thoughtful, judicial manner of slowly, emphatically repeating the answer of our Lord, while frankly assenting to its wisdom and truth, is very natural: "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices" (Saint Mark xii, 32, 33). Now, if one heeds the place as well as the sense of each word of Holy Writ, he will see that here Saint Mark is not at variance with Saint Matthew; for "*when* Jesus saw that he answered discreetly," "*then,*" and *not before*," he commended the lawyer and said, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

It is a harder problem that Saint Matthew, who has always heretofore loved to bring out his Master's influence on the souls about him, gives no intimation of the interesting change. But the great presence of his Lord was soon to pass away; more than ever his thoughts are now with him alone; and he may have felt it was best that, with our minds undiverted by the effect upon the scribe, we should think only of the great words of our Lord. Then, no longer questioned, Jesus said, "How doth David in spirit call Christ his Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David thus calls him Lord, how is he then his Son?"—a question meant to awaken a new train of thought—a question for a future time, asked that it might be remembered. Yet this awe-inspiring question led on to what instantly followed. In silence it was heard—a silence broken by the last word of the Son of man to the Jews.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

## THE LAST WORD TO THE JEWS.

THAT, according to the Old Testament, God is cruel and vindictive is as strange an error and as false as the equally dangerous error that, according to the New Testament, his Son is effeminate; that the one is too hard for mercy and the other too weak for justice. To guard against the one-sided view of the Saviour which looks only to his more endearing qualities, one of the two apostolic evangelists was made to witness more to the gentler, the other more to the sterner, traits of the Son of man and Son of God. In the earliest evangel a warrior's voice

"is heard around,  
Loud as a trumpet with a silver sound."

In the latest evangel, with sword ungirt, helmet unlaced, he ennobles his friends by his confidence and kindles their hearts with the love of his own heart. In the gospel of Saint Matthew he is the Reformer, in that of Saint John the Bridegroom. The two gospels complete and perfect each other; for the place held in Saint Matthew's gospel by the last word of Jesus to the Jews and by his prophecy on Mount Olivet is held in the gospel of Saint John by the loving farewell of Christ Jesus to his family. While we are hastening on to the last scene of all Saint Matthew compels us to stop and listen; and he has

prepared us to listen by having so made ready for the last word to the Jews and for the prophecy on Olivet as to bring them into harmony with all that has gone before. For, at the opening of his gospel, the herald condemns and threatens the Pharisees in words which at last the King repeats in thunder-tones within the temple gates. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus plainly tells the multitude, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." His first word warns against the Pharisees, his last word judges and condemns the Pharisees. The blessings that on the mount open the public ministry of the Christ are the antithesis of the woes that end the public ministry of Christ Jesus in his last word to the Jews.

Little the need of contrasting the purity and self-devotion of Jesus with the impurity and selfishness of the devotees of pleasure and vice; but there was great need of drawing out the comparison and conflict of true religion with the popular, plausible counterfeit which claimed and received the honors of true religion; therefore the inspired evangelist, midway in his gospel, fully sets forth the irrepressible conflict between the Spirit of Christ and the pharisaical spirit; and without some clear insight into that conflict, both then and now, justice cannot be done to the last word of Jesus to the Jews, either as their righteous condemnation or as a lasting and much-needed warning. The Saviour used no such unsparing language toward publicans and sinners as he used toward the Pharisees. Sins of the flesh did not so awaken his wrath as did their sins of the spirit. And

such has ever been the severity of his feelings toward them that we are prepared for the keenest reproach, the most awful indignation, when we hear his last word as to the Pharisees. Before there was the roll of foreboding thunder; *this is the tempest in collected might.*

Evil eyes paralyzed the tongue of mercy in the counsel where the high-priests and rulers were then gathered. The faces of Annas and Caiaphas were dark with the gloom of murder. It was the fitting time for a vision of judgment, the fitting time for the word of doom! Beginning with the calmness of counsel, the word grows vehement. Beginning with moderation, it kindles to invective, rises to prophecy, and sinks into tears. Opposing traits are fused together. Nowhere is the tenderness of the Saviour more touching; yet his last word to the Jews irresistibly carries thought onward to the day of the judgment of the guilty world.

Similar words the Christ had spoken before, but there is now uniformly a heightening of their force.\* The exception is the lament of the Saviour's pity, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." That poetry is unchanged when,

\* Compare verse 39 of the eleventh chapter of Saint Luke with the twenty-eighth in this chapter, the fifty-second with the fourteenth. The striking and strong figure in the forty-fourth of that is changed in verse 27 for one more striking. And assuredly Saint Matthew himself never made the change from Saint Luke xi, 49, to verse 34.

for the last time, it breathes the deep sorrow of his heart.

First, the Christ enjoins on the multitude, some of whom were then his followers and some of whom were to become so later, the duty of submission to their rulers; and well he knew that after three days his command would be enforced by his own conduct when led to their bar an unresisting prisoner. "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's seat;" therefore the people are to conform to their regulations; yet their violations of the spirit of the law are denounced, and the haughty exclusiveness of their religionism is contrasted with the humility and fraternity of true piety. Soon things appear so related to the solemn tragedy foreseen by our Lord that they were strange to listeners unknowing the danger of the Prophet; and there are quick transitions; yet through all, thought is linked to thought, feeling blends with feeling. Humility and equality are enjoined on some who afterward were to come into the kingdom; and in the fourteenth verse the stream of thought flows on in the woe to those who suffer not others who would enter the kingdom of heaven to go in. With that verse the discourse—so naturally—turns to the Pharisees;\* and then comes an enumeration of their crimes, which, though not so, may seem as disconnected with what comes before it as if the discourse began with the fourteenth verse. The Pharisees are charged with robbery on religious pretenses, with zeal for proselyting those they make

\* Some few manuscripts transpose the thirteenth and fourteenth verses; but the sense demands that they stand as in the received text.

worse than before. They are accused of false swearing, of hypocritical oaths broken on frivolous pretexts. Their fidelity to some lesser formal things of the law is commended ; but their lack of mercy and justice is contrasted with their zeal for forms ; and the moral pollution cloaked under their ceremonies is exposed and denounced.

When the Prophet begins, his disciples are in the foreground. They are warned against the example of their rulers, though they are to obey them ; graces, in contrast with the sins of their rulers, are enjoined ; and then, after the twelfth verse, it may seem that the Prophet no longer has the disciples in mind, yet every word is for them ; and though quick are the changes of feeling the unity is awe-inspiring. He counts up, one by one, the sins of the Pharisees, slowly, distinctly, arguing a little. They are whited sepulchres outwardly beautiful, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. They are hypocrites who build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous. Then, foreknowing the wrongs his people will suffer at the hands of Pharisees, he cries out, with anger which springs out of his tender love for those who love him, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

The Saviour foretold that the wickedness of the fathers of that generation would be visited upon their children. Some deny the justice of the law that the sins of parents can righteously be visited upon the heads of their children ; but the truth of his prediction soon was awfully verified ; and the fact itself comes under daily observation, as when the licentiousness

of a sire, corrupting the blood of sons and daughters, entails a miserable life and a premature death. Nor can it be denied that history clearly proves this law. Was not the righteous blood their fathers shed required of the French generation at the close of the last and the beginning of this century? Were they more guilty than their guilty fathers—those banished priests, the slaughtered nobles, the murdered king, the people led out into strange lands to perish in the cold? Still, in that law as inwrought into the second law of Sinai, the judgment of God upon the third and fourth generation falls only on “them *that hate me.*” Here our Lord charges the Jews with sharing in the guilt of their fathers; and no one is condemned for sin in which he does not partake.

Yet here there is more that is dark indeed! According to this word of the Lord messengers are sent from God that their blood may come upon those who slay them. Here, again, the strange thing is not the stating of this fact, it is the fact itself. For our foreknowing God *does* send forth faithful witnesses to his truth, knowing they will suffer in cruel ways at the hands of hypocritical Pharisees. It is strange; and yet there is something like it in the common course of things, for to be hurt and pained by the sins of others is a trial that comes to all—and so hard a trial that it can be patiently endured only by revering this voice from heaven, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

With those words of doom there comes a change of tone, a mysterious exaltation sudden as that in the holy mount, which as suddenly sinks into the cry, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!” In this quick transition



from terrible invectives, from a vision of prophetic and greater than prophetic judgments to the pity of that lament, the speaker is felt and known to be He whose farewell to his children is heard in the gospel of Saint John. With that lament the last word of the Son of man and Son of God to his unrepentant enemies becomes the mirror, not of his wrath against sin only, not of the inflexibility of his justice only, but also of the loving-kindness of him who left "the bosom of the Father, the glory he had with him before the world was," to "seek and to save the lost."

Marvelous, mysterious, the union in Jesus of the human and the divine! In his last word to the Jews Jesus looks beyond the crucifixion, and with anger and vengeance beholds offenses that are to come. Borne on the wings of wrath, his Spirit rises higher than a prophet's exaltation. Who is he that saith, "I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth." It is not the voice of a man. In the supreme authority of these words the tenderness of the Son clothes itself in the justice of the Father. They seem one and the same. But while we are awe-struck by the voice, the vision of the Ancient of Days, the awful presence changes into the person of the Man of Sorrows. With no sense of violence to the unity of his being we are instantly transported from the lightnings of the Eternal Father to the tears of the Eternal Son. And if, with open hearts, we hear the last word of Jesus to the Jews, we feel that Jesus was truly God, was truly man as his Scriptures teach, his children believe.

The close of the last word of Jesus to the Jews is a vision of love departing in sorrow from an unrepenting world. Love waits while every solicitation is tried. Not till then is the barren fig-tree withered away. And that farewell of love is an everlasting farewell. With unrelenting will, yet with saddening remembrances of the hopes of other days when beneath its wings it would have sheltered those it leaves forever, with prophetic foresight of continuing sins and gathering woes, with words of doom, with tears of sorrow, so departeth the Christ from the beautiful city, the type of the soul.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE WORD ON OLIVET.

WHEN for the last time out of the temple Christ Jesus goes, one of the disciples "shows" him "the buildings," they all hoping he might clear up the foreboding words, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." That hope is crushed. And then, alone, the Prophet goes down the steps of stone, over the brook Kedron, up the Mount of Olives, and sits down "over against the temple." There from Jerusalem, full in sight, comes up in that festival time the busy hum of the unconscious city, soon to be "encompassed with armies." And there Peter, Andrew, James, and John come to him privately.

Thus far this thrice-told story of the departure of Christ from the temple is remarkably continuous, consistent, and natural. Troubled by the judgment their Master foretold, his children, whispering together, put forward one of their number to show him the "goodliness" of the "buildings" of the temple—as if he knew it not from his boyhood. "Not one stone shall be left," he said; and then they let him go as he would, seeing and respecting his wish to be by himself. But some of his family could not bear to have him left so much alone. They must seek him. Of this number, of course, was Peter, as bent on finding his Master as when he missed him at day-break from his own house in Capernaum. He takes along his brother

Andrew for moral support ; or perhaps Andrew, who at Bethany, coming to Jesus before Peter, then brought his brother, was again the first. And for Saint Andrew there may be a place among the evangelists, as Saint Matthew either gave his version of the word on Olivet or that of Saint James. With Peter and Andrew, of course, James and John his brother go. Curious and anxious they go, full of fear and doubt ; yet had they not broken in upon their Master's solitude how much had been lost !—for after what was so natural came the supernatural.

A little while before, Andrew, Peter, James, and John could not bear their Master's forewarning of his death ; now, with souls quickened by the nearness of great events they ask him, "What shall be the signs of the end ?" Then, from out of his own deep meditations, Christ Jesus strikes the key-note of his word on Olivet, in this abrupt warning, "Take heed that no man deceive you." And, when the camp-fires of beleaguering hosts were reddening the sky, no captain ever said to his sentinels words so fitted to make them watchful as are the last orders of the Captain of salvation to his army. They tell how he would find his people when at last in person he comes to them again, how he would ever find them ; and though not understanding one prophetic line, he is wise in the word on Olivet who takes to heart its lesson to "watch and pray." For that lesson it is the fitting place. Jerusalem, with its ruin foreseen or remembered, is in sight ; and it is the fitting hour, for the passing away of greatness awakens the feeling that all shall pass away.

Our Saviour bound up his lesson with the fall of the city, with the ruin of the ancient world, with all

that was to be till he himself again should come ; and yet the purpose of his word on Olivet awakens a perception of its moral sublimity equally strong with its foreknowledge and its compression of all the future into a few words. For it was not so much the will of our Lord on Olivet to unveil the times to come as to inbreathe an unsleeping vigilance and prayerfulness into the hearts of all his people, fitting and making them ready for judgments of the nations, fitting and making them ready to meet their own temptations, trials, and sorrows, the pains of death, and the last great day which is to the world a surprise. *For that*, Christ Jesus takes up all his people with him into the Mount of Olives, and there blends the burning of Jerusalem, ever remembered, and the last judgment, ever foreseen, with his earnest, repeated warnings to “watch and pray.”

At times a prophetic instinct blindly stirs within us, foretokening that, as sight is now one of the instruments and pleasures of the mind, so foresight will be in the hereafter ; yet in this undeveloped state of being where “we know but in part” little is known of the laws of prevision. The blind understand not all they are told till their opened eyes behold the sky, the hills, the ocean ; and the words of a prophet are not clearly and fully understood till the predicted comes within the horizon. All there is in the word on Olivet cannot as yet be known. Its light is blended with darkness. But flashes of lightning are brighter for the clouds. An ocean prospect veiled in mists of the early morning awakens grander emotions than when the risen sun floods waves and rocks and islands with light.

In Oriental, ancient cosmologic thought time was as really an element as space in the making and being of a world. But of time as a constituting element in a world the modern Western mind knows nothing. And when the time-aspect of the world is spoken of in Scripture, thinking only of its space-aspect, it fails to see that by the end of the world sometimes the end of one of the great cycles that make up the time-world is meant. Very generally the ancients had an idea that in the ending of some of those cycles there would be convulsions and changes that would reach and shatter the frame-work of the globe. And though our means for precisely and fully determining just what were the time-ideas of the disciples are insufficient,\* yet still we know the Jews commonly believed that amid calamities and convulsions of nature suddenly the Messiah would come, the children of Abraham arise from their graves, and from a throne on the hill of Zion the Prince of the house of David reign over all the earth. With the disciples some such belief was countenanced by the fearful vision at the close of the parable of the sower; and when Peter, Andrew, James, and John asked for signs of the overthrow of the temple, of the end of the world, and of the coming of their Master as the Messiah they

\* Yet of these things some are known from intimations in the New Testament; and as gathered, more doubtfully, from Apocalyptic writings before and after Anno Domini; from the Book of Esdras, of Enoch, or the *Jewish* Sibylline Oracles. Josephus does not help in this matter. And to Philo-Judæus we turn in vain. That mystic spoke for himself alone. Not believing in a personal Messiah, he, *of course*, dressed up religion as a philosophy. And his Alexandrian allegorizing rationalism could not have been much known to the Jews in Palestine.



thought the time of all three was one and the same; for Saint Mark and Saint Luke, connecting the question with "no stone shall be left," give it in this form: "*When shall these things be, and what the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?*"\* And in that form it is the equivalent of the question in Saint Matthew's gospel, "*What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?*"†

So far as the word on Olivet was an answer to this

\* Saint Mark wrote in a heathen land. Saint Luke had the Gentiles much in mind. And (so to speak) they may have *translated* into a question more readily apprehensible by the Gentiles the question which Saint Matthew gives in Hebraic terms. As Saint Matthew's gospel had long been publicly read in all the Christian congregations it was the more natural that Saint Mark and Saint Luke should do as they did; and in each the plural *ταῦτα*, *these things*, and especially the *πάντα* in Saint Mark, *all these things*, must refer to more than the ruin of the temple.

† Παρουσία. This great word is in the earliest of the four gospels only (Matt. xxiv, 3, 27, 37, 39). Its plain, common meaning is a coming, as any one can see in 1 Cor. xvi, 17, where Saint Paul says he is glad (*ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ*) of the coming of Stephanas. As in a completed coming there is of course a presence, the word readily takes on the meaning of a presence, as in 2 Cor. x, 10, where Saint Paul speaks (*παρουσία τοῦ σώματος*) of "his bodily presence" as "weak." And the use of the word for the last coming of the Son of man is seen in these verses (1 Thess. iv, 15-17): "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain (*εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν*) unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord;" in James v, 7, "Be patient therefore, brethren (*ὡς τῆς παρουσίας*), unto the coming of the Lord;" in 1 John ii, 28, "Abide in him, that ye be not ashamed (*ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ*) at his coming;" in 2 Pet. i, 16; iii, 4, and in many other places.

question of the disciples it disclosed the coming judgment of Judea and the last coming of the Son of man in the end of time. The disciples looked forward to these as *to come soon, and together, and with their Master's visible coming as the Messiah*. He looked to his *invisible* coming in the judgment of Judea, and to his *visible* coming in the end of the world. *He also looked forward to all that was to come between those two great epochs that were far apart*. And presently we shall inquire as to what our Lord said of *that intervening time* by inquiring of history as to what has passed in that intermediate future, so far as it has come within the bounds of time.

As Jews, the disciples had felt that Jerusalem was so secure that unmistakable foretokens were given of its fall. Imperative were the orders to quit the city when those signs of its coming "desolation" were seen; and that great calamity so sets forgetfulness at naught, so transcends all national bounds, that those repeated enjoinings of hurried escape from the doom of the city deepen and prolong the warnings that still speak from Olivet like the notes of a trumpet to an army in a hostile land.

In the first ten verses, guidance, support, and comfort in the tribulations before the siege are given to the disciples. "They were not to be troubled, for those things must needs be." They would be beaten in synagogues, be persecuted, afflicted, killed. They would be hated of all for Christ's sake. Yet when brought before governors and kings the Spirit would give them utterance. They who "endure shall be saved." And though of those trials the scene is a little province of the Roman Empire, the time is far away,

yet in like trials the spirit of those words ever meets the needs and strengthens the souls of Christians.

Before the armies of Titus and Vespasian "encompassed" Jerusalem there were battles, sieges, and merciless slaughter in Galilee of which nothing is said in the word on Olivet; and nothing is there said of the "tribulation" of the Jews after the capture of the city. Yet the "desolation" of Palestine was not finished till half a century later, when a fearful war in Hadrian's reign ended with the expulsion of the Jews from their own country. Never fiercer their frantic heroism than in that war with the Romans; terrific the rage of their despair; yet the awful sufferings of their final struggle were the ineffectual writhings and quiverings of a dying man just before the stillness and stiffness of death. And, taking the mortal blow for the end, history dwells only on the siege and the fate of Jerusalem. But although nothing was said in the word on Olivet of the "tribulations" before or after the fall of the city, yet the warning of the Lord not only saved his people from the horrors of the struggle in which Jerusalem fell, but, separating them from their Jewish countrymen, it also saved them from later sufferings of the Jews in Palestine, and in other lands and other times.

After what is said of the judgment of Judea there comes this appalling vision of a far wider judgment: "*In those days*" "shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and there shall be upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking

after those things which are coming on the earth. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. And when these things come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads ; for your redemption draweth nigh."

Commonly, this is taken for a vision of the last judgment. *That* it cannot be. For in the gospel of Saint Matthew this judgment begins "*immediately after the tribulation of those days*"—words that, as here, should be joined with those in the gospel of Saint Mark, which say it begins "*in the tribulation of those days ;*" and, therefore, it cannot be the last judgment, whose coming is quick as lightning.

It is, then, sure that the judgment, so strikingly portrayed by our Lord in the twenty-ninth, thirtieth, and thirty-first verses of the twenty-fourth chapter of Saint Matthew, begins in, and has its fullness after, the judgment of Judea, the rounding out of its cycle coming after the course of the other is run ; and the words of our Lord also intimate that between the two there is a relation closer than merely the relation of time. To such a great judgment history bears plain witness. For "*in the tribulation of those days*" a judgment of the Roman Empire began in the last war of Rome with the Jews, which was the most exhaustive war the empire had ever known till then ; and that judgment reached much farther on and visited a much wider field than Palestine.

Therefore, to apprehend that awful judgment, from Olivet we must look around and look far onward. A belt of cities then encircled the midland sea, with the splendor and number of whose temples, amphitheaters, arches, obelisks, and statues no city now compares. Look and see how swiftly all this changes! Go, with Gibbon, chase the fleeting bubbles down the stream of time! The empire is rolled up like a scroll. Its fruitful fields are barren. The unlighted harbors of its empty cities are cursed by the pirate.

The Church and the State are the luminaries of the social heavens; and those words of our Lord foretell the darkening of the light of Christianity by the "mystery of iniquity" which began to work in the lifetime of his apostles, and the moldering away of civilization. Then the sun was turned into darkness, the moon into blood. On Olivet the Lord foretold what in the common speech of man are called the Dark Ages.\*

Judea was the soul, the empire the body, of the ancient world. Their lives were bound up together, and with the crucified Son of man Judea and the

\* Bryce, in the *Holy Roman Empire*, says: "The famous simile of Gregory the Seventh is that which best describes the empire and the popedom. They were, indeed, 'the two lights in the firmament of the militant Church,' the lights which illumined and ruled the world all through the Middle Ages; and as moonlight is to sunlight so was the empire to the papacy." In this the thought in the text above is rightly extended so as to reach to what are called the Middle Ages. And this confirmation of that thought is of the greater value as Pope Gregory, in calling the Church and the State great luminaries, the sun and the moon, seems not to have then had in mind our Lord's words on Olivet; and neither does the historian who is so struck with the aptness of the figure.

empire descended into the sepulcher. Tribes from the Scandinavian forests of the North, the children of the deserts from the South, came within the metes and bounds of the empire and rent it to pieces—"the eagles preying on the carcass"—till Constantine, successor to Augustus Cæsar, in trying to save Constantinople, the capital of the Roman world, was slain on the 29th of May, A. D. 1453, and that great day became an epoch in the dying of the Roman Empire. An epoch *in its dying*, for it is not dead. Its language is heard in the worship of half of Christendom, its code is law in more than half, and in many ways its spirit still lives in it all. And in lands held by the Turks its outward dissolution and decay are still going on; for to all the people of his dominion the Emperor Caracalla gave Roman citizenship, and, therefore, all the inhabitants of Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, provinces afterward overrun and held by Saracens and Turks, were Roman citizens long before the Moslem conquests. In the Koran they are always spoken of as Romans; and to this day and hour their master, the Sultan, rightly enrolls among his many titles that of Roman Cæsar.

For his elect's sake God shortened the misery of Jerusalem, and his mercy has enlightened the darkness there was in the Dark Ages; and still it may be that when two or three thousand more years are gone (should the world stand so long) men looking back to these days may think they well might be named dark, and say the unchristianized state of Christendom now, with its ready millions arrayed for slaughter, could aptly be described by the darkened sun and the moon turned into blood. And most certainly, this present



time is included in the vision in the three verses, whose time-cycle is called by holy apostles "the last days," "the last times," and is characterized by our Lord himself as "the days of the Gentiles." And to all who feel the pulses of our time the fitness of its prophetic description is plain. For a shapeless terror haunts the soul of the world. Men's hearts fail them for fear. That which was foretold there now is—distress of nations and perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring!

In further proof that in the judgment of Judea there was a coming of the Son of man now let us again consider the meanings of that phrase. It is the word-symbol of a manifold mystery. Boldly it sets forth seeming contradictions. One comes who is ever nigh. It is a symbol of both destruction and salvation. What in the holy gospels of Saint Mark and Saint Luke are signs of the destruction of Jerusalem, in the holy gospel of Saint Matthew are signs of the kingdom of the heavens. Therefore, a coming of the Son of man is a coming to destroy and to redeem; and, as prophecy foretold, "*the day of his vengeance is the acceptable year of the Lord.*"

When our Lord sent out the twelve he told them, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come;" after their accepted confession he said, "There be some of you which shall not taste of death till they shall see the Son of man coming in his kingdom"—a prediction and promise fulfilled in the holy mount. At the great epoch, known as the transfiguration, the beginning of his kingdom in the spiritual world was, no doubt, of surpassing glory; though to human thought it was far otherwise

in this world. After that epoch Saint Luke reveals that "the time of his assumption was being fulfilled." Yet in that period of our Lord's life on earth he "had not where to lay his head;" and in it at last his humiliation and exaltation so run parallel that far beyond any other it illustrates his own saying, that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

On the cross the Son of man was uplifted above the malice of the principalities and powers who brought about the ignominy and suffering of his death; for of that same hour when he was crucified between two thieves he prophesied, saying: "If I be lifted up, I will draw all unto me." Many things point to a coming of the Son of man in the judgment of Jerusalem, and that there was such a coming is undeniable. For in the hall of evil counsel he told his murderers that from that moment, ἀπ' ἄρτι, "they should see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." In Saint Luke the words are, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν, *from now*; and in each of those gospels the words are as strong and plain as it is in the nature of words to be.\*

Wherefore, in his condemnation to death, in the revilings, the blows, the falterings of the holy sacrifice under the burden of the cross, the Son of man was coming in *the clouds of heaven*.

In the hall of evil counsel his murderers saw that coming only with the eye of the soul; yet seeing that

\*In Saint Matthew xxvi, 64. and Saint Luke xxii, 69, the words are rendered in the Received Version, "*Hereafter ye shall see.*" The Revision corrects the mistranslation in Saint Luke, and lets it remain in Saint Matthew, making the gospels contradict each other.

could they have gone on? They did see it, and they did go on; and a thousand years afterward, in a hall of evil counsel in Constance an oath-breaking king, licentious nobles, and wicked prelates, in the same evil spirit and against a like convicting of the Holy Spirit, murdered Christ in the persons of two of his holy martyrs, whose souls yet cry from beneath the altar, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?" And, now, in this day and hour, there are those whose hearts resist like strivings of the Holy Ghost; the forms of cruelty changing, the sin, the convicting light, the same.

The mysterious contrast of humiliation and exaltation in a coming of the Son of man—save in his last coming in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels—is intimated on his way to Calvary, when our Lord said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children!" And while the darkening day, the quaking ground, foretold that the empire would share in the judgment of the province in whose sin it shared, the redemption in a coming of the Son of man shone out when Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" and the Roman centurion, whose soldiers nailed the holy sacrifice to the cross, with his soldiers, confessed that the Crucified was Son of God.

I must leave it to my readers to think out for themselves how in that very hour, in the souls of his murderers, those words of our Lord came to pass through the convicting power of the Holy Ghost—only saying that with the eye of the soul, thus quickened, they

beheld a coming of the Son of man. Save his last coming thus only is it seen; though possibly the eye of the sense-blinded world may for an instant be awakened to "*open vision*" by the shock of judgments such as the Death of Jerusalem, the Reign of Terror, the civil war in this nation. Be that as it may, of every coming of the Son of man the effect is two-fold, for ever in those days of his avenging justice *the trumpets of redemption are heard.*

Though history bears more or less plain witness to a continuous influence and intervention of the Son of man in human affairs, it is less open and visible at some times than at others; as intimated in the last parable on Olivet, where our Lord likens himself to a merchant who, intrusting his goods to his servants, travels to "a far country" and comes back to look into their conduct "*after a long time.*"

Of the phrase, "a coming of the Son of man," the usual significance is both literal and figurative; but, however figurative at other times, its meaning is literal when it points to the coming of our Lord "*in like manner as he was seen to go into heaven.*" And that last coming so fastens thought upon itself by its visibility, its suddenness, and its greatness that it stands in the way of our perceiving the continuous invisible coming of the Son of man which fulfills the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, to the end of the world."

Long seems the cycle of these "days of the Gentiles;" it has lasted for nineteen hundred years; but the six cycles of the generation of the world were "days of eternity;" something of their almost inconceivable duration geology has shown; and if the cycle

of these "last times" is now near its end its comparatively short duration will hardly be in keeping with the going forth of the Eternal Word in the days of the beginning.

In this cycle of time the third person of the most Holy Trinity is as really present in the world as was the second person of the most Holy Trinity in his life on earth. This belief and doctrine of the holy and universal Church is grounded upon the promise of our Lord that the Holy Ghost would come, which was so openly fulfilled at the Pentecost. It may seem to stand in the way of belief in a coming of the Son of man throughout the period so favored with the presence of the Holy Ghost; but in the work of creation the Word and the Spirit were conjoined, and in the Holy Scriptures they are never apart. Of this to give two illustrations only: According to Saint Luke our Lord said, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist." According to Saint Mark he also said, "It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." And only through an awakening conviction from the Spirit could the Sadducees and Pharisees in the hall of evil counsel have felt and known that their betrayed, deserted, unbefriended prisoner was "the Son of man, seated on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

"Infinite in matter of meaning" the word on Olivet! Who has fathomed all the meaning of the name, the Son of man? or who can say why that name alone is heard on Olivet? Who can tell what is "the abomination of desolation *standing in the*

*holy place,*" or what the sign of the Son of man in the heavens? \*

In the word on Olivet there is more than can now be understood; yet the seeing that at times our Lord had then in mind his continuous coming through all the subsequent ages *in the clouds of heaven, till in cloudless glory* he came to end the drama of time, clears up some things; and the correction of the error that the three verses (31, 32, 33) are a vision of the last judgment clears up these words which many find so difficult—"This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." The things spoken of were to come within the time of a man's life; and what were the things whose time is so fixed and limited? The answer is found in the question of the disciples. They came asking about the fall of the city and the end of the world. Those two events in their thoughts belonged together, as is clearly seen on comparing the form of their question as given by Saint Mark and Saint Luke with its form as given by Saint Matthew. Saint Mark and Saint Luke, joining their inquiry to what our Lord just before said of the ruin of the temple, give it as one question only. Saint Matthew gives two questions; and in much that our Lord said he disjoins the two things joined in the minds of the disciples; and, according to Saint Matthew, joined in their asking. He disjoins the two as to their times, though not as perhaps he might have done if his invisible coming in all the time after the judgment of

\*The "abomination of desolation" was a sign that was to warn Christ's people to flee from the city: and yet some comments hold that it meant the presence in the temple of the Roman army, though were it that it would have been too late for such a sign.



Jerusalem had been unrelated to and wholly unlike his *visible coming* when every eye shall see him. Still, he clearly puts a period of time between the fall of the city and the end of the world, for he says, "This gospel shall be preached for a witness, and then shall *the end* come." \*

Then he gives this sign of the approaching ruin of the city: "The abomination of desolation will stand in the holy place." He also said, "If any man tell you, Behold, Christ is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." He said that, after the desolation of the city, "the Jews would be led away captive and Jerusalem be trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled." And in a vision of things *after* "the tribulation" of the Jews he foretells the distress of nations, men looking with fear for the things that are coming; they see the sign of the Son of man in heaven; they see him coming, but *coming in clouds*; and these are things that do not suit a coming which is to be as sudden and visible as the lightning's flash that shineth from one end of heaven to the other. Our Lord recalled to Andrew, Peter, James, and John by his parable of the signs of summer seen in the leafing out of the fig-trees the signs he had given of the end of the city,

\* There may have been far more in our Lord's thoughts than the end of the "goodly buildings" of the temple. To him the fall of Jerusalem was the end of the religion that through him was to live anew; or here, *as with strong reason Dr. Whedon thought*, he may have meant by *τελος* the end of time.

and he said that what those signs foretold would come within the term of a man's life, before the generation living then had passed away. Having thus answered their first question, he then going on to answer their second question said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels, neither the Son, but the Father only." Of the coming of the end of the city he had given signs, he had fixed its limit, but he told his disciples that of the end of time no sign could be given. That is to come "like a thief in the night." It is not the consummation of any series of events that foretold its coming. It takes by surprise the realms of nature and of grace.

In the three verses the words and figures do not go beyond those of some of the ancient prophets when foreseeing and foretelling local and temporary judgments. They are almost the same after the words, "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Thence onward, in chapters xxiv, 43-51, and xxv, in Saint Matthew's gospel our Lord speaks of his final coming. And there our Lord says, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory." In the vision in the three verses angels go forth to call the elect; *in the vision of the last day all the angels come with the Lord*. In the one the Son of man is coming *in the clouds*; in the other he is seated on his throne.

Our Lord speaks of the last judgment; yet speaks of it only as a judgment of the Gentiles. Then "before him were gathered the Gentiles:" for so the

word *εθνη* (in our version here rendered "nations") every-where else is rendered. And it is certain that those who are judged are the Gentiles, because they know nothing of Christ till they see him on the throne of his glory. Yet some of them had walked in the light of him "who enlighteneth every man who cometh into the world;" for such "the kingdom of the Father had been prepared from the foundation of the world;" and *the judge welcomes those astonished heathen as his brethren.*

Marvelous the harmony between what is here revealed and words of Saint Peter at the beginning of "the days of the Gentiles." At "about the sixth hour" he prayed, and the Spirit said, "Three men seek thee. Go with them, for I have sent them." At Cesarea by the sea Cornelius, centurion of the Italian band, who feared God, said to Saint Peter, "Four days ago, at the ninth hour, I prayed, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Thy prayers are heard. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side." The hours of the prayers, the number of the days and of the messengers, the name, place, and trade of the tanner, are set forth with legal exactness; and all this minuteness suits the greatness of the instant when the chief of the holy apostles said, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him; and the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard" (See Acts x).

In the revelation on Olivet of the last great day

nothing is told of what Saint Peter revealed when he prophesied, saying that "in the day of God the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth also and the works therein shall be burned up. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness." And that the vision of the last judgment which ends the word on Olivet is limited to a welcome and sentence of the Gentiles is in close accord with the interpretation which has here been given of that word, so far as it finds in it intimations of a continuous, unbroken coming of the Son of man throughout all "the days of the Gentiles."

Of the future there are two widely different views. According to one of modern date, these "last times," these "days of the Gentiles," will open into a millennial cycle of vast duration; the older view looks for the ending of these "last times" with the last coming of the Lord. Other Scriptures may decide between the two, but not, I think, the word on Olivet. And again I turn to its one great and plain lesson.

No idle fancy was the fancy of old that a man is a microcosm, a lesser world, his little sphere an image of the greater sphere. To the great world there is a coming of the Son of man; so there is a coming of the Son of man to that miniature world, the soul; and each and every one should take to his own heart the warnings on the Mount of Olives. They are suited to each and every soul; they are meant for each and every one as well as for nations and the world.

After the thirty-sixth verse of the twenty-fourth

chapter our Lord, in speaking of the end of the world, still enforces the duty and the need of watchfulness. The surprise of the Old World by the flood, the quick dividing, one taken, another left, harmonize with the earnest, repeated warnings—*Take heed, watch, and pray.* The like is true of the three parables, with all their rich and varied teachings. And the great lesson is not lost sight of even in the terror and glory of the last judgment. The fourfold reiteration, compelling us to pause while hurrying on, and even the reasons for the decision of the Judge, in part seem given in manner and form as they are for the sake of that lesson. For the love of the Lord, which all the while is breathing into the souls of his children an unsleeping spirit of vigilance, now makes the vision of the last judgment warn the prudence of the world against offending the “little ones.” And here there is a striking coincidence between the oldest gospel and the last ; for Christ’s union with his people is here revealed as clearly as at the sacrament of love, when of the mercy shown to his children he says, “Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.”

To the word on Olivet all there had been in the life of Christ, all that there was to be of his dominion over the earth, give power. With this there blends an influence from the doomed city and the mountain, from the past and the future, from the flame and the darkness of prophecy. But, if possible, even more divine than the prophecy in the word on Olivet is the earnest kindness of the Saviour in warning all who in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, would abide the coming of the Son of man to watch and

pray : “ Ye know not what hour your Lord may come. Watch ye therefore : for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning : lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man.”



## CHAPTER XXXI.

## THE LAST DAYS.—(CHAPTERS XXVI, XXVII.)

SAINT MATTHEW'S gospel after Olivet — Christ Jesus at Bethany, at the last supper, his arrest and condemnation, his crucifixion and resurrection—this Holy Scripture has power over the soul greater than the great works of nature. In the hearts of millions of the quick and the dead it has kindled the faith of love. It is a divine creation. Is it not, then, profane to dare to pry into its construction? Is it not sacrilegious, irreverent, and dangerous? The like question has met us before. Here it comes up with greater solemnity than ever, and here the answer is the same as before.

The full inspiration, promised by the Lord to his witnesses when he said, "The Spirit of truth, whom I will send you from the Father, shall testify of me: ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning, and the Holy Ghost shall bring to your remembrance all things whatsoever I have said unto you," is now questioned by the same Jewish hardness of heart which crucified Christ Jesus. Heretics and apostates, in their bitter war against the Holy Scriptures, which daily and hourly is fiercer and wider, now deny the ancient apostolic and universal Christian faith in their full inspiration; and for the answer to their caviling at the sacred memorials of the last days of our Lord on earth before and after his

resurrection there is urgent need of clear insight into the immediate aim of each of the holy evangelists in that part of their gospels, with intelligent recognition and close and careful study of the differences in their manner and style. And the faithful reverent study of those sacred pages, word by word and line by line, with this end in view, will be a blessing even to those whose "pure" eyes are open to the self-evidencing light of the presence of the Holy Spirit in all of his Holy Scripture.

On the sublimity, the unearthly beauty, the unexhausted, inexhaustible spiritual glory of the records of the passion of our Lord many the precious volumes written, the sermons preached; and we are, *for the most part*, to look upon the portraiture in the earliest gospel, of the last days of the sacred life, only from the stand-point of historic and literary criticism. This is by no means the most vitally important or comprehensive one; and yet some little more of the naturalness and consistency of the sacred memorials can be seen from it than is visible from any other point of view. And here this first word contains the substance of much that is to be said. Saint Matthew's evangel of those days so overfills the heart and mind as to shut out their other events; for the time they cannot be thought of; they are as if they were not.

In this Scripture there are no coloring touches of creative imagination, though Saint Matthew's sensibilities were fine and quick, and its past was to him a spirit-stirring reality. With him, as with all the holy evangelists, a spontaneous unconscious naturalness and truthfulness was under the guidance, supervision, and control of the Holy Spirit, so that

through his gracious influence that past truly lived in the memory of his elect evangelist, and now lives an eternal thing. In this Scripture there is the power by which twice Saint Matthew has almost so equaled the reality that in his holy gospel Christ Jesus still speaks on the mountain, dies on the cross.

Saint Matthew opens his last chapters with a glance backward at prophetic Olivet, and with our Lord's telling that "after two days" his betrayal and death will come,\* thus marking the superiority of the Lord to the humiliation and suffering which so clearly he foresees, so calmly foretells. He then brings in the chief priests consulting in the palace of Caiaphas how to take Jesus and kill him, *yet fearing an uprising of the people*. Then he farther lights up the gathering darkness by the contrast of Mary† with Judas,‡ the adoration of the woman offsetting the man's villiany—the one a type of selfish greed blindly betraying, the other of holy love intelligently worshipping, the Saviour. §

\* Not in the other gospels.

† For the reasons for withholding of her name see *Thoughts*.

‡ In prose and in verse some conjecture that the traitor meant to force the Messiah to begin his reign; thinking his Master, forgiving his well-meant and well-timed presumption, would reward him with the gold Caesar pays the man who forces on him a crown. This is shown, they say, by the frantic effort at last to stay the proceedings, the throwing the gold away, the remorse, and suicide. This ingenious theorizing cannot stand Saint John's saying, "He was a thief," or the deeper brand of our Lord (John vi, 70). Yet the Spirit has not fully revealed the motives and character of the wretch. As in some mysterious murders, the horror stands out against the shadowy nature of the cause.

§ The historic dependence of the consummation of the treason on Mary's gift is close in Saint Mark and in Saint Luke; but there would be no evidence in Saint Matthew of some things in the text were it

The darkness which deepens with the crime of Judas is further relieved by the telling of a man whose insight into the mission of the Crucified was like Mary's. In Saint Luke, to Peter and John it is said, "Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready." Saint Matthew does not tell who were sent, and barely intimates that *somehow* they would know whom to follow.\* His thoughts more and more dwell on what is most closely related to his Lord; and his mind fixes on the message to the goodman of the house, "*My time is at hand*"—indeed a memorable message! It shows that in Jerusalem there was then a man who had looked deeper than any of the disciples into what *was written* in the Holy Scriptures of the Saviour, who was to be "smitten" for the sins of his people. And gratefully that nameless saint should be honored, for he was honored by this

not for his suggestiveness—as when Judas asks the priests, "What will you give me?" which lets us into his motive, and agrees with what Saint John says of Judas.

It is characteristic that Saint Matthew, and he alone, names the thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave (Exod. xxi, 32); and that he connects the treason with a prophecy in Zech. xi, 12, both here and in xxvi, 3-10. In each case Jeremiah is named, so Lightfoot thinks, because Zechariah belonged to the section of the Jewish canon which began with Jeremiah.

\* Yet πρὸς τὸν δέινα, "to such a man" (xxvi, 19), shows that the man was known to Saint Matthew; and to the other evidence of *caution* this language, in addition, is of peculiar force.

word from our Lord, "I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples."

Over the little company in his "large upper chamber" a storm was gathering. Over the city, over the world, a storm was gathering. That night the Saviour prepared an ark against the coming deluge. That night the temple high above the sleeping city, the full moon of the passover gilding its golden pinnacles, stood secure of its splendor. That night, in his guarded palace on the hill of Zion, no fears troubled the representative of Cæsar. Temple and empire have passed away, but not the holy sacrament or the dominion of our Lord!

THE PASSOVER COMMEMORATED the saving from death of the first-born of the families of Israel by the sprinkling of the blood of a lamb on the door-posts of their houses. Once a year, in remembrance of that type and prophecy of the salvation of their souls, a lamb was sacrificed in the temple for each of the households of Israel. All the meanings of all the sacrifices met in the sacrifice of that lamb. It was the type of the sacrifice on Calvary. *Wherefore* "the messenger sent before him" pointed out Christ Jesus and said, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*"

"And Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Then "they sang a hymn." Such the custom; yet how grateful,

how soothing! The strife for prominence is past; gone is Judas; in the "large upper chamber" there is heavenly peace—they sang a hymn.

There was the unmasking of the traitor, the forewarning to Peter of his denial, to the disciples of their falling away; but all the darkness of that night, past or to come, was illuminated when Christ Jesus said, "*It is written*, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." There is no alarm, no humiliation, there is courage and peace in these words on the way to Gethsemane. They uphold the glory of Christ in all of the seeming triumph of the enemy that was about to come. Uplifting the soul into the superhuman world, they give to the marvelous things in the future the certainty and reality of the ordinary and the present.

How sudden, how unlooked-for the change from the calm of "the upper chamber" and the assurance, on the way to the garden, of reunion in Galilee, to the agony in Gethsemane: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. And he fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." With unquivering eyes all that was to come the Christ had foreseen, had foretold it all with unfaltering tongue, yet "being in an agony his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." What can be the meaning of this? Christ Jesus had wept over the unrepenting city. He had given up the wish so often breathed in the lament, "Jerusalem, O Jerusalem!" In the



temple and on Mount Olivet he foretold its destruction. Why, then, this agony in the garden of Gethsemane? In the garden there was a temptation stronger than in the wilderness; yet, foreseeing that "the prince of this world cometh," Christ had said, "He hath nothing in me." In the garden and on the cross there was more than temptation. There the Christ, "who knew no sin," "was made sin for us." "On him the iniquity of us all was laid." By his sacrificial suffering in the garden of Gethsemane, "finished" on the cross, the Son of the blessed Virgin redeemed the promise he gave in the garden of Eden.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

THE LAST DAYS—THE ARREST.—(CHAPTERS XXVI, XXVII  
CONTINUED.)

GETHSEMANE was a field on Olivet in which there was a garden.\* Inside of the wall of the field stopped eight of the disciples. Their Master went on to the garden with Peter, James, and John. There they could see nothing beyond the outer wall; for Saint John marking that his Master, though captured, was not surprised, says that Jesus, knowing “all things that should come † upon him,” went forth. Waking up Peter, James, and John in the garden, he said, “Behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.” And at the gate of the field he awaits ‡ the coming of Judas.

“Forthwith” the traitor gives the soldiers the preconcerted signal. § His Master, saluting him by his familiar name, said, “Judas, betrayest thou the Son

\* *Χωρίον λεγόμενον ἡ Γεθσημανή*, “a field called Gethsemane” (Saint Matt. xxvi, 36; Saint Mark xiv, 32). Saint John has not *χωρίον*, “the field,” but *κῆπος*, “the garden” (xviii, 1, 26; see also iv, 5; Acts i, 28, and other places).

† This rather comes short of the force. The original is more emphatic—all that was to befall him.

‡ He could have saved his life simply by keeping away from Jerusalem, and a few hours would have placed him beyond Jordan, out of the reach of his enemies.—*Joseph P. Thompson*.

§ “The words of Judas reveal the venom of his base soul: ‘Whom I shall kiss, *he it is*; seize him, and lead him off safely. The unnecessary enlargement was pure satanism.”—*Howard Crosby*.

of man with a kiss?" Strikingly consistent with the tone of Saint Matthew's gospel is the leaving out those words and giving only those after the kiss: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" But to show this the translation must be set aside. Not because of the word friend,\* for *twice before* in this gospel it begins a stern reproof: "Friend, go thy way; is thine eye evil because mine is good?" and in the parable the king said, "Friend, how comest thou in hither? Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness." In our version, as well as in the original, the Bible is a self-interpreting book, and "friend" may stand; but *Wherefore art thou come?* does not suit our Lord's foresight as he went out of the garden. And *in the Greek there is no question*. It was an outcry; and its few quick words hardly can hold their fullness of meaning. That comes out when the exclamation thus is paraphrased after the manner of the Targums: Comrade, companion, enemy! *for this*

\* "Ἐταίρε is not φίλος. The idea of affection, of friendship, is carefully excluded from it. . . . The words of Judas in Saint Matthew are, 'Hail, Rabbi!' in Saint Mark, 'Rabbi, rabbi!' and this repetition is intensified hypocrisy. . . . Χαιρε, 'Hail,' is a very solemn form, full of affection and religious sympathy. And thus the real state of the mind of Judas is fearfully intimated. For the kiss itself, the word in Saint Matthew, and so in Saint Mark, is κατεφίλησεν. He kissed him earnestly, fervently, a deep, close kiss. Another proof of the utter extinction of all conscience. And, as the whole history of Judas is a type and prophecy of something to be developed within the Church of Christ, the earnest, impressive kiss, as of strong and especial affection, might prepare us to expect in that antichrist of whom Judas is a forerunner and an image some very strong outward marks of special attachment to Christ in the very act of betraying his truth and destroying his Church."—*The late Rev. William Sewall, D.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Oxford.*

*thou hast been with me! for this thou dost come! to fill up the measure of thy wickedness by foreknown treason.*

Seeing the signal, the ready soldiers seized Jesus and bound him. They seized and bound his disciples also. Wherefore our Lord asked the soldiers, "Whom seek ye?" Scornfully they answered, *Τὸν Ναζωραῖον*, "The man of Nazareth," and he said, *Εγώ εἰμι*, "I AM." *It is written* that "Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say to them? And God said unto Moses, Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Our Lord said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was I AM. *Then* took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." At the gate of Gethsemane he said to the soldiers, *Εγώ εἰμι*, "I AM," and "they went backward and fell to the ground." He asked again, "Whom seek ye?" They said, in a different tone, no doubt, "The man of Nazareth;" and Jesus answered, "I have told you I AM; if therefore ye seek me let these go." Hence it is certain that the outflash of his divinity was for the sake of his disciples. (Saint John xviii, 4-10.)

Those facts are told only by the last evangelist; and, until they are known, there are things in the earlier gospel that look very strange. For on that night the captain of the fortress Antonia, who four days before had looked out upon the triumphal entry of the Prophet into the city, went to arrest Jesus,

with all of his whole command in heavy armor,\* save a few left to man the walls. It was the full of the moon, but the legionaries, as they did on a night march, moon or no moon, took with them signal lights, and lights for near objects. † And with them marched the temple guard. The whole army was well-nigh a thousand strong.

Eye-witnesses of a varied and spirit-stirring train of events are not likely to see and to mark every thing. No one of the gospel writers sets forth all the crowded and quickly shifting scenes of that awful night; yet the common sense of the common mind receives their agreeing witness as the surest kind of testimony. And at last Saint John clears up *this strange thing*: An army in order of battle was drawn up at the gate of Gethsemane against One whose

\* Saint John marks that, by his use of the article ἡ σπειρα, "the band," the tenth part of a legion, about six hundred men. But Jerusalem was so great and so turbulent that its Roman garrison was sure to be strong. There were centurions under the captain of the fortress Antonia. He was χιλιάρχος, literally a commander of a thousand men (Acts xxi, 31, 32, 33, 37; xxii, 36; xxiii, 19, 22). Lysias, in a letter to Felix, the governor (Acts xxiii, 27), speaks of the garrison as an *army*; and well he might, for from it he detached as a safeguard to Paul 200 foot-soldiers, 200 cavalry, and 70 spearsmen—in all 470 men. The captain of the temple guard is also called a chiliarch, which proves that his force was not a mere handful. The curious fact that it had two chiliarchs suits either Jewish or Roman soldiery. If the latter, the Jewish captain was for easier intercourse with, and the greater convenience of, the priests. When the Jews asked Pilate that he should set a watch at the sepulcher he said, "Ye have a watch;" from which I conclude that the temple guard was made up of his own soldiers. And I do not think that anywhere in Palestine any military force would have been allowed (and especially in Jerusalem) that was not under the direct control of the Romans.

† φανων, λαμπάδων, the "lamps and torches" of our version.

eleven disciples had only two swords when they came there, and those were taken from them. To fight that army one of the eleven snatched a sword and cut off the right ear of a servant of the high-priest. Christ Jesus (then in bonds, as shown by his saying, "Suffer me thus far"), touching and healing the ear, told Peter to put back the sword. *From that his captors knew he did not mean to resist, yet those soldiers obeyed their prisoner and let the other disciples, and Peter also, go free.*

Jesus said, "Are ye come out as against a *brigand*\* with swords and staves to take me? I sat daily with you in the temple, and ye laid no hands upon me." According to Saint Matthew this was said in the hearing of all; according to Saint Luke it was addressed to the chief priests, the captains of the temple guard and the elders; but this natural difference is not the only one. According to Saint Luke our Lord also said, "This is your hour and the hour of the host of darkness." Saint Matthew may have had a similar thought when he wrote, "in that same hour;" but he was made to leave out those words and to bring in these: "All this has been done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Yet, just before, he told that in speaking to Peter our Lord used nearly the same words; and, when Saint

\* *Robber* were better than "*thief*;" but the right word is *brigand*. For that brings out the strong military force. As in our time, in Italy and Sicily, *brigands* have given trouble, so the Romans in Palestine were harassed by armed bodies of lawless men (zealots), against whom strong measures had to be taken. The "swords and staves" were the signs of soldiers and sheriffs. The former were in heavy armor, *δπλων* (St. John xviii, 3).



Matthew almost immediately brings in a second appeal to the Holy Scriptures, is it not clear that the inspired evangelist meant to light up the darkness with their sacred light? And is not this confirmed when thus he goes right on to fill up the sorrow and shame of that hour, by saying, "*Then* all the disciples forsook him and fled?"

Our Lord asked of the soldiers that his disciples might go back within the field. That would have kept them together. But the disciples did not heed this. They kept with their Master till he said, "All these things were done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then they felt that all was lost. Then the bond between themselves seemed broken to pieces, and they all scattered and fled. On that awful night *those were the last words they heard* from Christ Jesus. And it is a startling and prophetic warning when the inspired evangelist connects the desertion of Christ's chosen disciples with our Lord's own trust in Holy Scripture in the moment of the seeming triumph of his enemies.

*When our Saviour so honored the Holy Scriptures, then his disciples scattered and fled!* And this is written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the world have come!

#### THE TWO SESSIONS OF THE SANHEDRIN, IN THE NIGHT AND AT THE BREAK OF DAY.

In the passion of her Lord his Church includes all the doings of the Sanhedrin; with good reason using that word instead of trial. There was no trial. All the proceedings of the Sanhedrin were in violation of the Jewish criminal code, which strictly guarded

the rights of persons accused. The bribing of Judas, the setting of spies to watch Jesus, the indignities and cruelties inflicted upon him before a hearing, were illegal. He was arraigned at night. He was made to bear witness against himself. On the same day he was accused he was sentenced, and on a feast-day. All those things were illegal. The Sanhedrin condemned him to death without legal evidence; and it brought about his crucifixion by the Romans on a charge of which there was no evidence at all.

Scholastics often make an objection to the two trials from ignorance of the criminal code of the Jews. There was the form of a trial at day-break to give a veneering of legality to the illegal decree passed at night; as some members were not present at the night session hastily convened at an unusual place, the illegal forcing of evidence from the lips of Jesus was again resorted to; and then, without deliberation, again he was hastily condemned. As the sentence was passed in the previous night, Saint Matthew, with characteristic suggestiveness and swiftness, records only the real business of the session at day-break, namely, how they were to induce the governor to carry out the sentence. All was quickly done. For had the startling news that the Prophet was led a prisoner to the bar of the Roman governor flown through the city the excitement, the commotion, and the running in from encampments on the hills and in the valleys would have been dangerous; but when it was known it was too late for an uprising of the people.

All that the gospels tell of that night and morning is consistent. The taking of their prisoner by the temple guard to Annas first, and the illegal bru-

talities of the passionate and powerful old reprobate; that together in haste the Sanhedrin coming at an unlawful hour, in an unusual place, then and there passed sentence of death; that, for the sake of covering lawlessness with a cloak of law, at day-break a form of trial was hurried through lest some should repent or the people rise—all this as told or intimated is thoroughly consistent. Saint Matthew leaves out the scene with Annas and the one with Herod; the later evangelists, who knew his gospel by heart, often fill out his outlines with things precious indeed; and yet had Saint Matthew recorded them they would have lessened the unity of his portraiture of a time so crowded with events. Saint Matthew leaves out much; yet seven of the nineteen verses telling of the night and morning in the palace he gives to Peter's denial of his Master. Elsewhere concise, here he is diffuse. With minuteness he tells how Peter "followed afar off unto the high-priest's palace," "went in, and sat with the servants to see the end;" how "there came unto him a damsel, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest;" how he went out into the porch and there "another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied *with an oath*, I do not know the man;" how "after a while there came unto him they that stood by, and said, Surely thou also art one of them: for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then he began to curse and swear, saying, I know not the man." Now, on reading all this without taking into consideration the writer's inspiration, we

might suppose that a part of it had well been kept back, but Saint Matthew\* understood that only by putting it all in could justice be done to Peter's penitence, when, at the look from his Master, Peter goes out and "weeps bitterly." No writer ever better understood how to produce the effects he intended; as when with serene trust that the majesty of Christ Jesus will be visible in any and all circumstances, a trust which ever touches the human heart, a trust given from on high, he dared to say, "They did spit in his face, and buffeted him, and smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is it that smote thee?"

His protraiture of the last days of the life of our Lord is beyond the possibilities of human genius; and yet the sign-manual of Saint Matthew is stamped on its sacred pages. On the margin of their pictures artists print their initials in fine characters, found when diligently looked for; and on the description of the time from the evening in Bethany to the evening when the body of Jesus was laid in the sepulcher there are the unmistakable marks and signs of one and the same hand. When Jesus is led away from the place of trial at night there comes in the penitence of Peter; after the session at day-break, when Jesus is led away to the judgment-seat of the governor, the remorse of Judas comes in; in the one case the darkness is relieved by the "bitter weeping" of the disciple, in the other by the traitor's self-murder.

\* And here it is to be remembered in connection and contrast that in his roll of the apostles he alone says that Peter was *first*, and alone records his blessing at Cesarea Philippi (x, 2; xvi, 17, 18).

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE LAST DAYS—OUR LORD BEFORE PILATE.—(CHAPTERS XXVI, XXVII CONTINUED.)

THE temple guard, hurrying the prisoner at the break of day through silent streets so lately echoing his welcome; the Roman sentinels eyeing with insolent coolness; the coming forth of Cæsar's representative—such things the imagination can supply. It is enough when Saint Matthew says, "And Jesus stood before the governor." Of any *accusation* he says nothing; but they who thence infer that his gospel is made up of unhistorical traditions mistake his style. His silence tells more forcibly than words that with Pilate the accusation went for nothing; and that well the governor knew the state of the case is shown in the wondering pity and scorn of his words to the bound, bleeding, fainting prisoner, "*Art thou the King of the Jews?*"

Weaker still is the cavil that Pilate knew too much. Roman governors gave heed to the religion of their province, which with little warning might bring about commotions or insurrections. And it is foolish to say that the procurator knew nothing of the man whose fame filled the land, knew nothing of the Prophet who in that same week had entered his capitol in triumph. Only the night before the governor gave his own order to the commandant of his fortress Antonia to arrest Jesus; and, though heavily bribed, no

Roman magistrate would have issued such an order on the petition of the priests and rulers of the Jews without first inquiring and knowing why they would have him seized. And Saint Matthew leaves not the governor's knowledge as a mere inference: "*Pilate knew that for envy they had delivered him.*"\*

By that word "envy" the Holy Ghost reveals the secret of the hatred of the scribes and Pharisees. *It is written* that "wrath is cruel, anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before envy?"\* It is the most satanic, the most selfish, unscrupulous, relentless of the evil passions. Wherefore that one word of inspiration strikes clear down to the root of the malice of the chief priests and the elders. They could not bear that Jesus was in every way superior to themselves; and their feeling was transparent. Pilate "*knew that for envy*" they would have him crucify Jesus.†

Human nature alters the least of things below the sun. Envy is now the secret of the hatred to Jesus of some men of letters or science, who, coveting a high place for themselves in the thoughts of men, claim to be the rightful lawgivers, the real "principalities and powers," of the world. In the presence of Jesus Christ they are nothing; and they will not forgive the Nazarene his making human glory an impossible thing. For there now is no other glory than that of a union by faith and love with "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us

\* Prov. xxxvii, 4.

† Saint Mark also (chapter xv, 10) says, "Pilate knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy."



wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, Him that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

### THE DREAM OF CLAUDIA PROCULA.

How well Jesus was known appears in the word to the unnamed saint, "My time is at hand;" in the confession of the thief, "This man has done nothing amiss," and in the dream of the governor's wife. That her sleep was troubled by her husband sending his soldiers to seize the Prophet was natural enough; but to Claudia her dream was more than a common dream; and she conveyed that idea to her husband when she sent him word that her dream was *of that day*, for the Romans thought that dreams in the day-time, more than others, were of supernatural origin.

At the time when such marvels were passing in the human world that the prophetic instinct awakened in holy Mary who anointed Jesus for his burial, in unholy Caiaphas who prophesied that one man should die for the people, the superhuman world must have been greatly moved; and with reason Claudia Procula felt that in her dream the Genius of her nation gave warning. The religion of Rome was simple in her earlier ages; her morals pure. Superhuman guidance she ever sought in oracles, omens, and dreams. And in that awful crisis of her destiny Rome's guardian angel so presented her piety before the Eternal Memory that "when the governor was set down on the judgment-seat his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things *this day* in a dream concerning him." Awestruck, the

governor felt that the gods were interfering. For the Jews, quickly reading his mind, instantly appeal from his visible fear of the gods on high to his dread of his god on earth. Their threat of denouncing him to jealous, suspicious, unforgiving Tiberius was too much for Pilate. The invisible powers who fought against Rome prevailed. Yet, in behalf of his nation the governor deprecates the wrath of the gods. As the representative of Rome he washes his hands before the multitude, "saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person : see ye to it." And again the Jews read his mind. They knew he was trying to purge his nation of the sin of putting Jesus to death, for "*all the people answered and said, His blood be upon us and our children.*"

#### THE CRUCIFIXION.

Concealing nothing, disguising nothing, Saint Matthew so lays bare the wrong, the shame of the arrest of the night and the morning trials, the cruelty of the governor who scourged Jesus and gave him over to brutal soldiers who, like the Jews before, mocked him and smote him, that the glory of the Son of man shines through it all, and through hours of thicker darkness. His suggestiveness is felt in Simon's helping Jesus to bear the weight of his cross, in the putting aside the cup offered to benumb the sense of pain ; and like the effect of the words at the end of the last supper, "they sang a hymn," is that of the words, "they sat down and watched him there." They come in between the tortures and insults inflicted on Jesus by the Romans and the later mockeries and revilings of the Jews. In the verse before the

light of prophecy touches the dying Christ; and then the words, "they sat down and watched him there," come like the sudden lull of wind and rain, the hush of the storm when we wait and look for the fury to come. The Romans had fastened above the murdered Christ the inscription, "This is the King of the Jews." Then in the gathering darkness a feeling of awe, a sense of the supernatural, stirs within their steel-clad breasts. And while Rome, her fury stayed, and dimly recognizing something superhuman in Jesus, looks for what may come, the evangelist tells of the more lasting hate, more bitter scorn of the Jews.

When with the insults and mocking of the soldiers of Pilate Saint Matthew names the crown of thorns, the purple robe, awe and veneration blend with our pity; in the verses (39-44) \* that tell of the insults and mockeries of the Jews a like feeling comes with the words, "He said, I am the Son of God. *Now* let him come down from the cross." The thieves also which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth. Saint Matthew knew of the penitence of one of those wretches; but then the thought of it no more came into his mind than it does into ours when our souls are wholly given up to his vision of those cruel days. And from a purely literary and critical stand-point coldly looking (if that were possible) we see that a record of the penitence of the thief, and of what our Lord then said, precious as it is in the fitting place given to it in the *Evangeliad* by the Holy Spirit, would not be in harmony with the tone of Saint Matthew's description.

\* The thirty-eighth is brought in where it is lest its later insertion should too much break in upon the unity of those verses.

In Holy Scripture darkness as well as light is the dwelling-place of God, and darkness now gathers over the cross. The inspired evangelist turns our thoughts to that spiritual emblem; yet so intense are our feelings that we can hardly take in its full meaning, or that of the cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" Grievously that cry from the cross has been misunderstood. Those words are the opening words of a psalm that foretells the sufferings, the wrongs, the triumph of the crucified Christ Jesus, and as a few notes recall the whole of an anthem, so those words recall the whole of the Twenty-second Psalm. Therein the prophet is so moved by the Holy Ghost that he is at one with the Saviour crucified. He feels the shame, the suffering, the resignation, the triumphant assurance, and the blessedness of the dying Redeemer.

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? I am a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord; let him deliver him. They pierced my hands and my feet. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. Deliver my soul! *Thou hast heard me!* I will declare thy name unto my brethren. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him. For he hath not despised the affliction of the afflicted; *neither hath he hid his face from him. All the ends of the world shall turn unto the Lord.*"

Hearing the cry from the cross, "Eloi, Eloi!" the Jews thought the crucified called for Elias, of whom it was the last word unto Israel from Jehovah, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming

of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." They heard the cry with a thrill of expectation; and one of the soldiers ran and filled a sponge with vinegar and put it on a reed and gave him to drink. Some of the Jews would have hindered, saying, as did the soldier himself, "Let us see whether Elias will come to save him." Then all was over. Again Christ Jesus cried with a loud voice, and he 'yielded up the ghost.'

The earth quaked, rocks were rent, graves opened, and bodies of saints that slept arose. All those things Saint Matthew remembers; yet, true Hebrew that he was, and wise by the inspiration of the Almighty, what was of higher and more solemn meaning had the first place in his memory—"The veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom." As Saint Matthew felt, so felt Saint Mark and Saint Luke; for, seeing what Saint Matthew wrote, they pass over those lesser things, but neither was permitted to pass over that greater wonder and sign!

Well knowing that our souls would not be wholly content with supernatural witness only, Saint Matthew instantly brings in human testimony to the Crucified. In so doing he changes places for an instant with Saint Mark and Saint Luke—that is, becomes more definite and full than they. They name the centurion only; but Saint Matthew marks that what their captain said his soldiers also felt—those soldiers who "sat down to watch him there;" and his having told that before now gives force and effect to his telling that not the centurion only but "they also who were with him" said, "This is the Son of God."

The heart of the inspired writer of the earliest gospel was ever awake and alive to signs outside of the

people of Israel and the land of Palestine, of the world-wide dominion that was to be the dominion of Christ Jesus; and of the holy evangelists God granted to him alone the delight of recording in the opening of his gospel Persian witness to Christ; at its close (with more fullness and completeness than any other), the recording of Roman witness to Christ. And the divine harmony of Holy Scripture is felt when, not in the Pauline gospel of Saint Luke, but in the gospel of Saint Matthew, are these witnessings to Jesus the Christ from out of the heart of the world—a prophetic testimony to the Son of God from Gentiles of the Far-East and of the West, a witness at his cradle and beneath his cross! The world was represented at the cross of Christ. The world is ever there. Humanity cannot shut out the vision of the Crucified, and is ever compelled to cry, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

Before the scene which he has revealed in the awfulness of its sad sublimity, gently, tenderly Saint Matthew draws the veil. He remembers a group of women; they stand afar off; and yet their names are in grateful harmony with our pity. The calm of night is falling over the scene; “the even is come.” With Joseph, “a rich man,” wealth is there with ready help. The “clean linen” gives to our hearts, as it gave to the heart of Saint Matthew, the comfort of decent care. In “clean linen,” our dead is laid in the new tomb in the rock. And Saint Matthew’s heart beats in the words, “There was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulcher.” All that is left us is safe! The two Marys are watching there!



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## THE RESURRECTION.

WHOEVER is familiar enough with the war upon the Bible clearly to draw its outlines will see that a main point of assault upon the holy gospels has been their evidence of the resurrection; and that at this point the defense of the gospels has not been efficient.\*

I. The true defense of the sacred evidence of the resurrection begins in the beginning of Holy Scripture with the promise of One of woman born who should bruise the serpent's head. This defense culminates in the revelation in the holy gospels of the Eternal Word made flesh that he might atone for the sin of his creature, man; and thus "finish" the revelation to this world, and to the universe of worlds, of the justice, mercy, and love of God. He consented to the

\* The writer of *Supernatural Religion* says: "The accounts in the four gospels of the resurrection are not only contradictory, but *they mutually exclude each other*." Even Westcott says, "The specific testimony to the resurrection is 'partial, fragmentary;'" so much so that it needs to be upheld by "an underlying trust in the divine destiny of creation!" He also says: "In Christianity, as the absolute religion, the incarnation gives permanent reality to human knowledge; the resurrection gives permanent reality to human life. They furnish a basis for a religion which is a complete satisfaction of the religious needs of man." His leaving out the atonement is an evil sign! But the purpose of this note is to call attention to the fact that there are difficulties in the *direct evidence* of the resurrection; and my readers should mark the charge, that its gospel records "mutually exclude each other."

cradle, consented to the grave. Yet the laws of nature were bent by his hands. Death obeyed his word. It stands to reason, then, that in death, as in life, the man Christ Jesus was superior to the common lot. A nation's cry calls not its hero from his tomb. Man lies down and rises not till the heavens be no more. But when Christ Jesus, who said, Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή, "I am the resurrection and the life," gave himself up to die, *could he be holden of death?*

With the apostles—as proved in *Thoughts on the Gospels* by words of Saint Peter—the main historic evidence of the resurrection of the Christ was the life he lived before he died on the cross. Of course, each of the holy evangelists gives *direct* historic evidence of his resurrection; yet gives but a little part of the direct evidence at his command. Twenty verses only are given to it by Saint Matthew. He was present at meetings of the risen Christ with his disciples, of which he says nothing. Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John were content with a like partial testimony. And there is direct evidence of the resurrection which is found only in an epistle of Saint Paul's.

II. It should be well understood and considered that in giving that direct testimony the four evangelists never lose sight of one object, namely, *to prove that our Lord arose from the grave in the same body that died*. In this they were divinely kept in harmony with a purpose of our Lord himself. For his appearings to his disciples were not meant to prove that he lived in the Spirit as Moses lived—whom three of them had seen and heard. *Of that*

the disciples had no doubt. But, *for whatever else he may have come to them*, it was one of his purposes to make them sure that he lived again in the same body that was crucified; for on Easter evening Jesus stood in the midst of his "affrighted" disciples and said, "Behold my hands and my feet: a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And he did eat before them" (Saint Luke xxiv, 36-43; Saint John xx, 20, 24-29).

*To the bearings* of the specific intention of the evangelists to prove that the man Christ Jesus came to life again *in the same body that died*, and upon their treatment of *the direct human testimony* to the resurrection, little thought has been given—little even to the intention itself; yet in Saint Matthew's gospel it is plain, full in Saint Luke's, and clear in that of Saint John, who wrote long after Saint Paul's anxiety and anger were awakened by the stealing within the fold of heresy as to the resurrection of our Lord in the same body.

The instruction in that earnest purpose of the evangelists is now much needed; for upon the resurrection of Christ Jesus in the same body depends the certainty of the resurrection *in the same body* of all who die; and that is scornfully denied by some *quasi* orthodox teachers who try to set at naught the fact which holy men were so moved by the Holy Ghost to reveal. They put forth an old heresy as new truth. Many new theories are "the newly risen ghosts of ancient errors," and this is one of them; for in spite of the teaching of evangelists and apostles the resurrection of the same body was questioned in their own day, and throughout the early Christian

ages it was denied or evaded on much the same shallow pretenses as now. The treatise of Irenæus on the resurrection of the same body was aimed at "*all heretics*," though he says it was also written for some within the fold who were "uneducated, faltering, or weak-minded."

III. Like their successors at the present hour, the gnostics—the knowing ones—took themselves to be of a philosophic turn of mind;\* yet neither philosophy nor natural religion knows or can know any thing of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection. For though one of the fathers truly and well said, "The creation is instinct with renewal, the whole revolving order of things bears witness to the resurrection; in his works God did write it before he wrote it in his Scriptures;" yet what nature writes of the resurrection can be deciphered only by the light of revelation.

Some of the ancient rationalists held that "the resurrection takes place as soon as a man comes to a knowledge of the truth;" others said, "It is accomplished immediately on the departure from life." They all said that the resurrection of the same body was an impossibility; and they farther argued that it was not a thing to be desired by the blind, the lame, the ugly, or the old. All their misrepresentations, evasions, and denials were wisely answered by the fathers, who said that "if the body be dissolved in fire the vaporized *elements* received into the world are there laid up in the store-house of the Lord, who in an unspeakable manner formed and can *re-form*

\* Saint Luke singles out the resurrection of Jesus as the doctrine mocked at in philosophic Athens.

the body." And yet, while meeting the assailants of the faith at each and every point, the fathers only brought out the meaning of the Holy Scripture, which points out that in the tiny circle of its seed is firmly held and safely kept the seminal life-principle of the broad-shading elm or of the majestic oak ; and which says to whosoever questions the raising of the dead, scornfully asking with what body do they come, Thou fool ! to each and every seed thou sowest, after it dies and when it is quickened, God again gives it its own body transformed into its own tree with its own crown of leaves, the glow of its blossoms, the glory of its fruit ; and so the body sown in dishonor is raised in glory.

Some of the reasoning of the fathers, fashioned to meet gnostic errors long since forgotten—such as that the body of our Lord was never flesh—now reads strangely ; yet they efficiently disprove much that now is said against the Christian doctrine ; but far more instructive than even their battling with heresies that still beset, or their meeting them with arguments that still are good, is the opinion of the fathers that the resurrection of the same body is a cardinal doctrine with which the faith must either stand or fall. *That* Tertullian said when he thus began his argument : "The resurrection is the Christian's hope ; by it we are believers." And to that word of old time I join this word from Tayler Lewis, one of the deep thinkers of our own time : "The New Testament not obscurely teaches that a most important part of Christ's work was the redemption of the body as well as of the soul. If there is any thing fundamental in Christianity it is this. With its rejection must go all that

has ever been regarded as distinctive in the creed as well as in the philosophy of the Church." Our Lord still raises up men of prophetic gifts. Along the ages voice answers unto voice! Yet what is human persuasion compared with the authority of these words? "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen, whom God raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, *your faith is vain*; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived. Christ is risen from the dead, and become *the first-fruits of them that slept*. He shall fashion anew this body of our humiliation in the likeness of his own glorious body" (1 Cor. xv, and Phil. iii, 21).

IV. The *seeming* differences in the holy gospels as to the appearings of Christ Jesus after his death and burial *all cluster round his tomb*; and they can be reconciled by the fact that distinct and separate companies of women came to the holy sepulcher, some earlier and some later. This could not have been otherwise than so; for a goodly number of devout women followed the Saviour from Galilee, and there were some in Jerusalem who loved him. Of course, they were not all together. Some were in one street, some in another, and some in the camps outside of the city. They all wished to go to the tomb, but they could not have all gone together. That only one party came is not to be thought of, and that which hardly could have been otherwise becomes certain when the gospels tell that the time of one visit was "while it was yet dark," and that of another



was "after the sun was up." And all of the seeming differences as to what took place at the holy sepulcher on the blessed Easter morning, which many hold to be irreconcilable, *can be reconciled by the fact that each of the four evangelists records a visit different from that of the others in time, in persons, and in what was seen and heard.*

V. Saint Matthew was allowed to give only a few words to the resurrection. He tells so swiftly of the great marvel around which myth and legend naturally would play, where if any where they would be sure to come in, that a thoughtful skeptic must wonder that as to so great a thing his words are so few. He gave more verses to the coming of the wise men than to the resurrection of the Lord. And yet, as was said of his inspired record of the cycle of events from Olivet to the cross, and as presently will be proved, his witness to the resurrection is so absolute in perfection that nothing more is needed for precision, fullness, force, and effect.

As the earliest evangelist he had all the visits to the sepulcher on Easter morning to select from. Of those visits he chose the one of greatest interest and moment.\* Yet he chose only one.

And it is also characteristic that from afar he prepares for his proof that our Lord arose, and in the same body. His evidence begins with the making of the sepulcher sure, the sealing the stone, the setting a watch. The Jews did not think that stone walls

\* This is one of the many facts incidentally coming out which go to prove that Saint Matthew was the first evangelist, and to disprove the wicked assertion of infidels and heretics that the second gospel was before the first.

could imprison or soldiers arrest a ghost; but "*the deceiver*" had said, "in three days he would rise again;" and they did those things lest his disciples should "come by night, and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen." All of this we remember when told, "There was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall see ye him: lo, I have told you."

This is more full than usual, yet not a word can be spared. The mention of the stone, the keepers—though it could hardly have been left out—reminds of what was told before. The portrait of the angel lends power to what he said. And we pause to mark how the angel's simple words, which even Dante could not have put into the angel's lips, make the supernatural seem natural: "*Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*" Like many things in the Bible, they seem preordained for a place in the word of God which abideth forever.

Before Saint Matthew began his last chapters he fixed upon his way of portraying the appearing of Christ Jesus in Galilee, and having decided that he would draw its outlines only, he had to guard against

the delusion that the risen Christ was a phantom. That he could do through what those women whose visit he selected did on meeting with Jesus. And how natural, how life-like that is! Jesus is walking toward them; he stands still to hail them; they in fear and wonder come slowly toward him; and then, in Oriental fashion, they fall to the ground and, clasping his feet (*ἐκπάρτησαν*), *they hold them fast* and worship him.

It also suited Saint Matthew's plan and purpose that *twice* the great meeting in Galilee was spoken of to that company of women, once by the angel and again by the Lord. But here let us think of these words of the angel: "Behold, he goeth before you into Galilee: lo, I have told you." Those words are a promise and a prediction. They are also in the nature of a command; and, on hearing the angel, even those Eastern women must have felt with glad surprise that they might go, ought to go, and would go to the great meeting in Galilee. And, as their going was a sure consequence of the angel's words, as by him it was both permitted and foretold, Saint Matthew said nothing of its fulfillment. Here, as in the case of the miracle of the tribute money, he speaks without words. With him the prediction by the angel is enough to make it known that *women at the great meeting heard the great command*, "*Go preach the gospel.*"

Before his crucifixion *thrice* Jesus told of that meeting; and those three foretellings so awakened beforehand the feeling that some great thing is to come to pass in Galilee that with no fear of its being forgotten or lost sight of Saint Matthew brings in a new

train of events. He exposes a calumny in circulation among the Jews, which, perchance, for some special reasons, had taken a very strong hold upon him. The narration could not well have come in before nor well have been postponed; but it seems to be out of proportion, for of the twenty verses on the resurrection ten are given to the story; and yet on looking closely into it there is seen testimony, both Roman and Jewish, that is directly in the line of the purpose of the evangelist to prove the restoration to life *of the same body*. And though to this story one half of the chapter on the resurrection is given, this does not break up the chapter. It does not break in upon its unity. Its check to our earnest hurrying on is that of a rock to a mountain torrent that, curving and sweeping around it, flows on swifter than before.

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.” This completes the many things that before made us look so earnestly onward. The meeting-place fixed by the Lord is known to the disciples beforehand. Then, on that appointed mountain, the scene suddenly opens—as when with expectant eyes a traveler, hastening along a mountain pass, comes to a turn in the way and lo, the looked-for prospect is before him!

VI. The whole of *the direct* proof of the resurrection in the oldest written apostolic gospel is stated in the twenty lines only; but even more marvelous is the fearlessness of the telling that “some doubted.” In that the Holy Spirit made Saint Matthew’s faith in the power of truth as strong as Abraham’s faith in the word of God when “he was tried and by faith offered up Isaac, and he that had received the

promises offered up his only begotten Son, *accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead.*"

On its human side the brevity with which Saint Matthew gives his *direct evidence* of the resurrection, though characteristic, was no doubt somewhat owing to his writing within seven years afterward, when most of "the five hundred" still were living, and the others of the Christian congregation (nearly all of whom then dwelt in Jerusalem) knew of the great meeting from its eye-witnesses; but its brevity should not be thought of apart from its power, its sufficiency, its fullness. And the shortness of this inspired history of the great meeting of the risen Lord with the whole company of his followers on the appointed mountain is fatal to the criticism which holds that the gospel according to Saint Matthew is of "fragmentary" traditional origin; for tradition cannot rest content with truth in its simplicity or even in its fullness. However great the majesty of the truth, tradition, with inventions of its own fancy, tries to magnify and adorn it. Its very nature irresistibly drives and compels it to amplify and exaggerate. Wherefore the dullness that denies the truthful character of Saint Matthew's holy gospel is almost beyond the comprehension of any one who comprehends the bearing of the facts that the evangelist withheld his hand from writing out a full description of the scene on the mountain; and that his description so plainly and forcibly reveals the power of the words of his Lord upon the soul of their witness that from his that power passes into the souls of all with open hearts who read his gospel.

VII. Of the ascension the inspired evangelist does not speak directly. In Saint Peter's gospel it is but named, and were their two the only gospels it would seem as if the risen Lord might now reveal himself to sight when two or three are met in his name. The third evangelist tells that "a cloud received him out of sight, and angels said that this same Jesus shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." And there is the wisdom of God in this setting forth in the Evangelriad of the two seemingly irreconcilable facts, Christ's dwelling with his Father in the heavens and his dwelling in the earth with his Church.

During the forty days the Saviour was only with his disciples from time to time, and never for any long time. He came and talked with them. He ate with but did not live with them. Save at the appointed mountain his comings took them by surprise. Where was he at other times?

On that mountain he said, "Unto me all power is given;" not *will be*, but *is given*. The inference (which hardly falls short of the force of a direct statement) is that no forty days passed before the Son was with the Father in the heavens. And that so it was is proved with mathematical certainty on comparing what our Lord did on Easter evening with these words he said on the night he was betrayed: "I go my way to him that sent me. It is expedient for you: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you . . . from the Father." Now when Easter-day was "far spent," at Emmaus, the risen Lord took bread and blessed it and gave Cleopas and another disciple. "Their eyes were opened." They knew him,



and he vanished. They go to the city. They meet the eleven (all save Thomas) *and others with them*. They are told that the Lord hath appeared unto Simon. In their turn they tell how he made himself known to them "in the breaking of the bread." For fear of the Jews the doors were shut. Yet "Jesus stood in their midst. And he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained " (Saint Luke xxiv, and Saint John xx, 22, 23). What our Lord did on the evening of the day of his resurrection, taken in connection with what he said before his crucifixion, makes it certain that his ascension was on that day ; and therefore on the fortieth day the veiling cloud signified that the appearances which witnessed to his bodily resurrection were ended ; though on that day his appearances did not wholly end ; for our Lord came in person to Saul on his way to Damascus, and to Saint John in Patmos.

VIII. In Saint Matthew's inspired reserve as to the ascension there is a different idea of that "wonder and sign" from the one that is common now. But though the Holy Spirit withheld his evangelist from revealing any thing of the ascension *directly*, yet he permitted him clearly and forcibly to suggest it through those words of our Lord at the appointed meeting in Galilee which end his gospel. Those words sound like the last orders of a departing king. "All power is given unto me in heaven," gives the idea that henceforth his home will be "above the heavens." The promise of the Saviour that he will be always with his own is manifestly a promise of his spiritual presence. And thus Saint Matthew's chapter

on the resurrection, short as it is, completely fulfills its great office. It proves that Jesus arose from the dead. Of this it gives attesting signs and wonders. It proves that he arose in the same body. It exposes the calumny of the Jews; and it reveals that now from the heavens Christ Jesus rules over all, and that spiritually he is present with his people in the earth. No uninspired man could have written the last chapter of Saint Matthew's holy gospel. It is signed with the sign-manual of God.

On comparing two presentments of Christ Jesus in Saint Matthew's holy gospel, one near its beginning, the other at its close, the one on the mount of Beatitudes, the other on the appointed mountain in Galilee, the whole of the earliest gospel is seen to be from one and the same evangelist. At the opening of the public ministry Saint Matthew, saying the least possible of the great works of Christ Jesus, as swiftly passes on to his word on the mount as if to him who, hearing the Lord call, "rose up, left all, and followed him" an angel whispered—whosoever hears will know the voice of the Son of God. And as he began, so, with like conviction, he ends his argument. Before, he did say that a multitude was gathered there from Judea, Decapolis, and beyond Jordan; now he says even less than that little. Only the "some doubted" tells that others besides the eleven were there. He names no man or woman—though familiar with some he beheld them all. Yet in saying, "When they saw him they worshiped him," and in telling that "some doubted"—words true then even as now—he fully and clearly reveals the spirit of the first congregation that was ever assembled in

Christ's name on this earth. That was before the Lord had spoken. It was "when they saw him." After he had spoken did any of them doubt? That we know not; but we know that here the holy evangelist feels, what time has proved to be true, that whosoever hears that word of the Lord Jesus with open heart will know his voice and be sure the Crucified has risen.

In opening his holy gospel Saint Matthew was moved by the Holy Spirit to feel that words of our Lord would give a truer and deeper sense of his majesty than his miracles; now, at its close, he is made to feel that his words are of greater power than his ascension to prove his true divinity. And the holy evangelist was divinely made to reason well when he closed his mighty argument with these words: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. And, lo, I am with you alway." That is the voice of Jesus! The tone is the same, and yet is not the same! Even from his lips such authority never breathed before. To him "all power is given." He is clothed with omnipotence. "Lo, I am with you alway;" he is omnipresent. Those words of the Lord which close the first apostolic argument in proof of his divinity, in spirit and in truth are the same with these which open the last apostolic argument: "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. And he became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory."

If in the genealogy Saint Matthew's holy gospel seems to conform to Jewish ideas of the Messiah, immediately this is followed by revealing through the prophecy of Isaiah the same glory in Christ revealed

in the opening words of Saint John's holy gospel. The beginning and the end of Saint Matthew's gospel alike make known that the dominion of Christ Jesus is over all created things. In its beginning the starry worlds are represented in the star at his birth ; the nations of this earth are represented by the wise men from the Far-East who worship him. Here, at its close, the word of our Lord himself reveals his universal dominion over things in heaven and things on earth. Of that word Saint Matthew's gospel throughout is a prophecy. That word fulfills its prophecy. And we close his gospel content to think of that word.

THE END.

## THE WISE MEN:

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Pp. 245. Price, 85 cents.

SMITH'S *Dictionary of the Bible* says that Saint Matthew "leaves the country of the magé undefined." The Commentary of Dr. Lange says: "*The part of the East from which they came cannot be determined. Justin fixed on Arabia, Chrysostom on Persia, while some have specified Parthia, Babylonia, Egypt, and Ethiopia.*" Dr. Norton, so long the pride of the University of Cambridge, threw out the second chapter of Saint Matthew from his last work, a *Translation of the Gospels* (1856), calling it "a strange mixture of astrology and fable." Princeton and Andover, with whom his life was one long conflict, answered not his challenge when dying. In Germany they found no help and they touched not the dead warrior's shield. Dr. Upham proves that the magi were Persians. He brings their pilgrimage within the line of historic probabilities. He has explained the very difficult though seldom noted fact that according to the sacred record the magi knew that the new star was the star of the King of the Jews, not through any specific revelation to them, which they would have told, and the evangelist would have recorded, *but through natural means only.*

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DR. UPHAM considers the star which guided the magi to have been the star of stars, the most important star of the universe, whose light first touched the earth at the time of our Saviour's birth. The idea is certainly most sublime that God should cause his grandest orb to shine upon our sin-stricken earth just as he caused his Son to appear upon it for man's salvation. We urge Dr. Upham's arguments for his position as most interesting and weighty upon the attention of all. But whatever the opinion regarding this, the book has excellencies wholly apart from it. It is full of profound and original thought. It abounds in sublimities and beauties. The part entitled "The Astronomic Doubt as to Christianity" is itself a treatise of great value; and the exposition of the Eighth Psalm, occurring in it, is a specimen of the highest and truest style of exegesis. His thoughts on the death of the children at Bethlehem and his argument thence to *the salvation of all infants are novel and conclusive*. But we cannot emphasize one part of the book above another. It is a rich and precious contribution to the literature of a true Christianity.

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Christ's early Judean ministry, or give his farewell to his disciples? Why does Saint Matthew recite the genealogy of Joseph and not that of Mary? Why does he make no mention of Lazarus and the family at Bethany, so dear to Jesus? Why, though mentioning the other Marys who beheld the cross, is he silent as to the presence there of the chief Mary, the blessed mother? How many devout souls have been perplexed by these questions! Dr. Upham meets and solves each one of these difficulties with others we have not mentioned."

THE author is already known to the world by works which disclose a thorough command of the resources of modern criticism. He now offers a series of views *as to the origin and structure of the gospels* which are among the most significant and sagacious that we have met with for a long time. His first inquiry is, What are the Gospels? Dr. Upham answers this question with a great weight of reasoning and suggestion. The gospels are not biographies or histories. If so they would not have passed over the whole youthful and formative period of the character of Jesus Christ, or his earlier Judean ministry given only by the last evangelist, nor compressed their accounts of whole journeys into the brief statement that Jesus went about teaching and preaching. Evidently it was not their purpose simply to make known the history of the man Christ Jesus.

The gospels are arguments to prove that he was the Son of God. They are selections from the facts of the life of Christ which prove him to be a divine Saviour, the Redeemer of the world. This view of their nature and design is, so far as we know, *entirely original with Dr. Upham, and it is a highly significant and fruitful view*. It will at once be perceived how readily it disposes of a whole body of objections drawn from the irregular form of the sacred narratives. . . .

Dr. Upham finds that for some reason Saint Matthew had the habit of not mentioning names. As to certain persons he was reticent. This could not have been due to ignorance, for of these were Lazarus and the family of Bethany and others well known to all the apostles. The only reason conceivable is that it was not safe to speak of those persons because they were peculiarly obnoxious to Jewish hostility. This course of reasoning is carried on with great minuteness of research, and a strong case is made out. As a result of this inquiry it follows that the gospel of Saint Matthew was published in the midst of the persecution "which arose about Stephen;" and Dr. Upham

has achieved what may well be deemed a most important result. In the present state of criticism, with the strong tendency to refer the gospels to a late and a legendary origin, every discovery of clear indications of the date of one of the gospels is of deeper interest and greater value than the deciphering of all the hieroglyphics of Egypt.

THE LATE REV. B. F. MARTIN, L.H.D.,

*Professor of Logic and Philosophy in the University of New York.*

DR. UPHAM'S survey of the gospels and their times is taken fresh from life. One purpose of his volume is to show that the gospels, especially Saint Matthew's, were not written so long after the events as even Christian apologists have timidly conceded to exacting opponents. We believe the grounds he takes to be true and demonstrable. In our edition of Matthew, prepared for English republication, we avowed the firm belief that his gospel was written within eight years from the crucifixion. Dr. Upham confirms this with arguments that cannot be refuted.

Very conclusive proof of the early date of the earlier gospels he derives from the hypothesis of *prudential concealment*. Matthew almost omits the mention of the blessed mother, because too free a mention would expose her to persecution and danger. Luke names not the family of Bethany for a similar reason. We recommend the study of this remarkable point to our biblicists, not only in these pages, but in the sacred text itself. This fact of concealment for safety appears unequivocally. We trace it even more widely than Dr. Upham suggests.

THE LATE D. D. WHEDON, LL.D.,

*Editor of the Methodist Quarterly Review.*

DR. UPHAM'S view of Matthew's gospel as silent on some things because of the persecution when Stephen was martyred, of the oral gospel and its relation to the synoptics, his explanation of the genealogy, and his treatment of the unity of the Evangeliad, are *convincing*. All our theological students should read and ponder his book rather than the skeptical treatises of Germans and Hollanders. Dr. Upham has a venturesome, yet a careful, mind. He is enthusiastic, yet well balanced. He has proved himself in his works not only a wise commentator, but a true discoverer.

THE LATE HOWARD CROSBY, D.D.,

*Chancellor of the University of New York.*









10

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